

THE HONOLULU STAR-BULLETIN'S CRUSADING CULTURE
THROUGH TOUGH TIMES AND SALAD DAYS:
A HISTORICALLY INFORMED ANALYSIS OF CULTURE AND IDENTITY

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE DIVISION OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI'I IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

IN
POLITICAL SCIENCE

DECEMBER 2004

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Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge the following people for their invaluable support: Dr. James Dator, my committee chairman, for his patience and conscientious ushering along of this project; committee members Dr. Andrew Arno, for his thoughtful input; Dr. Elaine Bailey, for her understanding of my interdisciplinary study; Dr. Kathy Ferguson, for her guidance, insights and critical evaluation; and Dr. Kathleen Kane, for her helpful suggestions. I also wish to thank my colleague Dr. Beverly Kever, for her encouragement and access to some of her records, and the University of Hawai'i for its support. I also want to thank Dr. Fred Fedler, my friend and colleague from the University of Central Florida, who encouraged me to start my Ph.D. and who has patiently followed my progress over the years. Former *Star-Bulletin* editors David Shapiro and John Simonds gave me much of their valuable time in interviewing and checking details in my many conversations with them.

My family gave me the gift of time and emotional support for this project, which spanned the early years of the lives of my children, Aliya and James. We all learned a lot about persistence. And, I wish to thank my husband, Steven Petranik, whose encouragement enabled me to take on this project. His helpful insights on the *Star-Bulletin* and his careful editing of countless drafts of the manuscript were invaluable and beyond the call. Mary King Auman, my mother, had faith in me that inspired me to carry on with my Ph.D. after her death in 1999. I also want to thank my father, Harvey, who has helped me and my family during this time, as well as my friend and mentor at UH,

Dr. Carol Anne Dickson. There were many others who I may have failed to recognize at this time but who kept me on track with their interest in the project.

I dedicate this to the newsroom staff of the *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, whose trust and support were critical to the success of this study. Their passion for their work and their loyalty to the values of good journalism were exemplary.

ABSTRACT

In 1999, the *Honolulu Star-Bulletin* survived an attempt by Gannett Co. and Liberty Newspapers to close the paper after a citizen's group stepped forward and forced the paper to be put up for sale. It was an unprecedented move in America, and 18 months later a Canadian purchased the paper. What was so special about this newspaper that enabled it to survive? This dissertation analyzes the influences that shaped the culture and identity of the newspaper in an attempt to determine whether these contributed to its survival. I take an integrated cultural approach to the study of the *Star-Bulletin* as an organization and analyze expressions of culture as revealed in interviews of 23 newsroom staff members. Shared meanings as well as ambiguity are examined. Key attributes of culture and identity emerged that staff members believed contributed to the paper's survival. These include a crusading, competitive culture, and a belief by the staff that the paper is the "local" paper, which helped ensure the loyalty of readers who resisted the influence of big U.S. mainland companies on Hawai'i.

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Background

When Canadian publisher David Black announced he wanted to buy the *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, some employees at the paper called him their “savior.” The paper’s owner, Rupert Phillips, had announced in September 1999 that he was shutting down the afternoon paper. But the newsroom staff cheered when a year later Black said he would keep it alive. A soloist praised him to the tune of “O Canada” at a celebration at Murphy's Bar and Grill in downtown Honolulu where staff held Christmas parties. Two large flags — one Canadian and one Hawaiian — went up on the wall near the *Star-Bulletin's* copy desk. Smaller Canadian flags and lapel pins appeared all over the newsroom.

But much of the elation had dissipated soon after he actually took ownership on March 15, 2001. Anxieties about job security turned into concerns about editorial quality and about everyone working harder for less in a brutal head-to-head competition with *The Honolulu Advertiser*, owned by Gannett Corp., America’s largest newspaper company.

It was Gannett that had tried to eliminate the *Star-Bulletin* by offering its previous owner \$26.5 million to shut it down. Phillips accepted the offer but the *Star-Bulletin* was kept alive because of an anti-trust lawsuit filed by a union-backed citizens' group that persuaded Judge Alan Kay to require that the paper be put up for sale. The involvement by a judge and a citizens' group in preventing a paper from closing was unprecedented in America, where readers have sat back and watched one newspaper after another close,

with owners citing declining circulation as the reason for the newspapers' demise.¹

In most cities in the United States, major newspaper chains have a monopoly. Where there are two newspapers, there is usually a Joint Operating Agreement (JOA) that allows the two newspapers to share presses and advertising sales and circulation, while keeping the news and editorial departments separate and competitive. That is how the two daily newspapers operated for nearly four decades in Honolulu. So, when David Black made the *Star-Bulletin* an independent newspaper, it was the first time since 1962 when the JOA was established that there was business competition as well as news and editorial competition among daily newspapers on O'ahu.

Black also bought *MidWeek* because he needed a press to print the *Star-Bulletin*, and subsequently formed O'ahu Publications to oversee the two. The news and editorial staff moved from the stately News Building that they shared with the *Advertiser* on Kapi'olani Boulevard to new offices at Restaurant Row, and began printing at *MidWeek's* presses in Kane'ohe.

¹ A citizens group, the Committee for a Two-Newspaper Town, was formed in Seattle during the 2003 negotiations involving the Joint Operating Agreement between the *Seattle Times* and the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* to keep both newspapers operating. The *Post-Intelligencer* did not have printing presses and stood to lose if the JOA were dissolved; the *Times* said it was also losing money. *Times* Publisher Frank Blethen called for an end to the JOA, but later said he would prefer to readjust the JOA profit split back to its pre-1999 division to benefit the *Times*. See Bill Richards, "Blethen: Profit shift could end JOA fight," seattletimes.com, Friday, Sept. 5, 2003.

Overview: Why Study the Star-Bulletin?

The near death of the afternoon *Star-Bulletin* and its subsequent sale was a watershed in its 118-year life, and prompted my interest in doing this study. What was so special about this newspaper that key individuals in the state of Hawai'i wanted it to survive? This study attempts to go beyond the surface explanations and events about why the *Star-Bulletin* survived: to save union jobs or for anti-trust reasons. A cultural approach to the study of the newspaper as an organization is illuminating because it beneath these surface answers and sheds light on the newspaper's unique situation in Hawai'i and its local characteristics. In the cultural approach, I consider the *Star-Bulletin's* newsroom to be an organization of individuals who have created shared meanings about their culture and identity throughout the history of the organization, some of which have endured in a symbolic form that has become these individuals' reality. They have also received culture through various influences. This approach examines the newspaper's culture through my lens and the lenses of the staff members in the newsroom in seeking expressions of these symbolic forms. The study focuses on those individuals who had the most influence in creating and publishing the newspaper each day – its news editorial staff and managers.

I have drawn upon and been inspired by many scholars from the fields of organizational culture and management. Martin's (2002) thorough and wide-ranging analysis of the whole field of organizational culture theory and application proved invaluable in locating an appropriate perspective and laying out the dilemmas in doing

qualitative research, such as the personal involvement of the researcher. I explored the range of perspectives and methods laid out by Martin (2002), Alvesson (2002), Alvesson and Berg (1992), Schultz (1994), Frost (1985), Smircich (1983), Schein (1992, 1999), Trice and Beyer (1993) and many others I mention later. Some researchers focus only on what Martin calls ideational aspects of culture, such as shared meanings. Others focus on material aspects, such as material conditions and functionalist aspects of work. My study of the *Star-Bulletin* falls within the interpretive approach, and assumes a broad definition of culture that includes both ideational and material aspects of culture. Following Martin (2002), I have relied on symbolic and functionalist approaches to provide a more complete understanding of the expressions of culture at the *Star-Bulletin*. As such, it is a generalist, integrated approach that accepts culture as consisting of shared meanings, conflict and ambiguity.

A study of organizational culture necessarily entails a discussion of the definition of culture used in the study. Definitions of organizational culture abound and intersect many fields, such as anthropology, management and administrative science, sociology and psychology. One's definition presumes an approach to the study of organizational culture; it serves as the foundation of the study. I have relied primarily on Smircich's (1983:56, also in Frost et. al, 1985) definition of organizational culture in which organization members express their view of the world and image of themselves in the world through symbolic forms. They develop a shared identity through their unique history, personal interactions and environmental circumstances. Yet I find Smircich's

definition limiting and have relied on Martin (2002) for a clearer understanding of the meanings that are not shared, and of ambiguities in symbolic manifestations of culture and meaning. Alvesson & Berg (1992) showed me the links between “the symbolic picture” and the “social-constructivist approach,” and contrasted that with the objectivist or material concepts of reality — a functionalist approach.² Schultz (1994) added a useful categorization of functionalist and symbolic approaches. Schein (1992) and Trice and Beyer (1993) were helpful in their analyses of leadership, ownership, competition and culture, and Trice and Beyer (1993) provided help in analyzing the occupation of journalism, subcultures, and the impact of the culture Hawai‘i on the *Star-Bulletin*. Organizational culture researchers, particularly those in anthropology and sociology, seem to ignore the impact of relevant industry trends, conditions and economics on the staff and the culture. For this, I have used newspaper industry literature (*Columbia Journalism Review*, *American Journalism Review*, and *The American Editor*, for example).

At the core of the study is an examination of the construction of shared meanings that express the culture and identity by selected journalists at the newspaper. Identity constructs form one of the most important signifiers of organizational culture (Karreman, 2001; Whetten and Godfrey, 1998). Identity and organizational culture are manifested through symbols, which are located in and interpreted through an analysis of interactive conversations involving the researcher and the participant (Karreman; Whetten and

² These two approaches could be seen as two sides of a third approach that integrates the two.

Godfrey; Czarniawska 1998). Martin (2002), Buker (1987) and Czarniawska (1998) note the importance of examining stories in understanding culture. They inspired me to collect and analyze stories from individuals as an effective way to get beyond surface manifestations of culture that one might collect in a survey or from participant observation. The discourse of the participants is loaded with symbols. Symbols are also identified in written texts, such as newspaper accounts, and in cultural artifacts, which would include physical surroundings, page design and actions of leaders. (Alvesson and Berg 1992; Schein 1999).

The study is context- and organization-specific, and does not attempt to generalize about other newspapers' cultures. As such, events in history in Hawai'i are used as reference points by participants and the researcher in identity and meaning construction. My understanding of local identity and history in Hawai'i was enhanced by ideas primarily from the writings of Okamura (1980, 1994), Rosa (1999), Kubo (1997), Trask (2000) and Silva (1999).

Czarniawska (1998), Lundberg (in Frost et. al, 1985), Martin (2002), and Adams and Ingersoll (in Frost et. al, 1985) provided the foundation for my discussion on my personal involvement in the study. They discuss as a dichotomy the outsider (etic) and insider (emic) viewpoints in studying an organization. My approach, however, is that the researcher does not have to choose one or the other position, but can have multiple identities and move between the etic and emic viewpoints. This could be characterized as a third position or view. Later I discuss my positioning as a scholar/researcher (outsider)

and former journalist (insider), and the interesting implications of this for the study, particularly in the method used and analysis of journalists' stories, including their published stories.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study is to create understanding, provide a record and add to the limited knowledge about a major voice and significant institution in Hawai'i. This newspaper has had an impact on nearly every citizen through its power to shape the politics of the state and consequently the conditions of the people's everyday lives. The study also offers a different perspective on how to study the organizational culture of a news organization. It encourages academics and industry professionals to climb out of the neopositivist box that confines much thinking about news culture to analyze and think about news organizations and their identities in a new way.

Previous studies have documented in excellent detail the important history of the *Star-Bulletin*. This study is somewhat different because it is framed by theory, and part of it covers a significant period in the life of the paper that has never been documented, that is, the life of the paper from the mid-1970s until the summer of 2004.

Method

I agree with Czarniawska (1998) that in the end, in social sciences our approaches inspired by other scholars. Individuals who have at some time worked for the *Star-*

Bulletin are interviewed as well as a few other stakeholders. The interviews were conducted from November 2001 to February 2004. Articles published in the *Star-Bulletin* and in other publications up to July 2004 are referred to when relevant to provide an additional reference point. Other cultural artifacts, such as office space and page design, are also interpreted by me and the participants.

Finding My Way: Weaving Strands of Theory Into Coherency

When a researcher begins any study, these questions must be asked: What approach am I taking and why? What methods should I use? An examination of studies of organizations reveals a variety of perspectives and methods that divide researchers and offer quite different understandings. In the end, we are inspired by other scholars, and, with a purpose in mind, we are drawn to approaches and methods that seem to provide the most complete and satisfying understanding of an organization.

My study represents a journey for me into the diverse, contested and not-yet-mature field of organizational cultural theory, and in particular, into the symbolic approach that I utilize to analyze the narratives given in interviews mainly of *Star-Bulletin* staff. The interview format is well known to me as a former journalist, but, as I explain later in the method section, the ground rules in an academic study are different. In some ways they are freeing; in others they are more restrictive, yet in the end the goal is the same: to gain understanding for its own sake.

The cultural, symbolic approach enriches any analysis generated only by a rational, journalistic approach to the study of the narratives given in interviews by *Star-Bulletin* staff — that is, a description of their tales devoid of a theoretical framework. These narratives, told by some of the best journalistic storytellers in the state of Hawai‘i, are about the stories they published as well as their meaningful experiences at their newspaper. Nevertheless, the symbolic approach is limited in its analysis of expressions of culture. Here, the functionalist perspective provides support — for example in the analysis of influences that shape organizational culture outlined by Hofstede et. al (1990) and Trice and Beyer (1993), such as job duties, newspaper production routines, structure and leadership. The values and practice of journalism are founded in functionalism and rationalism, and as such, journalists themselves frame their work using a functionalist, rationalist lens in the day-to-day production of stories and newspapers. The nature of journalism cannot be ignored in this study because it is about a newspaper; nor can I ignore my previous experience as a journalist and my rationalist journalism and business school academic background. Rather, I will draw upon the synergy and connections these create when their functionalist approach engages the symbolic, cultural perspective to achieve a more in-depth, multi-faceted and sometimes contradictory understanding of the organizational culture of the *Star-Bulletin*.

All approaches are guided by a rationale or interest in why the study is being conducted. Alvesson (2002) encourages scholars to consider why they are conducting a study. He divides these rationales and interests into three categories: technical, practical-

hermeneutic and emancipatory. The *technical* interest aims to develop knowledge in order to manage and control culture as a variable; the *practical-hermeneutic* interest aims to achieve understanding and knowledge rather than to control culture in order to solve a problem; the *emancipatory* or postmodern interest seeks a critical reflection of social conditions and values within the culture (Alvesson 2002: 8-12). My study of the *Star-Bulletin* falls primarily in the practical-hermeneutic interest, and it is also concerned with why the *Star-Bulletin* was worth saving – that is, whether there were attributes in the culture or enduring values that contributed to its survival — or at least attributes that the individuals interviewed believed helped it survived.

The study does not attempt to prescribe any course of action for the *Star-Bulletin* because it focuses on understanding, but it does discuss its future in terms of its survival.

Issues In Organizational Culture Research

Approaches in Newspaper Studies

First, I review the key issues that have divided researchers in the field of organizational culture, key trends, and the approaches taken by scholars in newspaper studies. Then I relate these to my positioning in the field.

The most important issue dividing researchers in organizational culture studies is whether they view culture in an organization either as a *variable* or as “a metaphor for organizational life” (Martin 2002:4; Smircich 1983). In the first view, organizations *have culture* that is out there to be managed and manipulated; in the second, organizations *are cultures*, and are viewed as a lens for studying organizational life (Alvesson and Berg 1992; Smircich 1983). When culture is treated as a variable, researchers usually take a functionalist, sometimes neopositivist approach; surveys and structured interviews are often used and objectively analyzed. When culture is viewed as a lens for studying organizational life, the symbolic approach is preferred. Scholars interpret manifestations of culture, such as rituals, physical arrangements and language, as having symbolic meaning constructed by the members (Martin 2002, Alvesson and Berg 1992; Pondy, Frost, Moran and Dandridge 1983; Schultz 1994; Czarniawska 1998, Alvesson and Berg 1992; Frost, et al. 1995).

Since about 1980, scholars have increasingly studied the cultures of organizations to gain a better understanding of organizational life and values. Researchers have taken functionalist and symbolic approaches, and sometimes both at the same time. I have been

inspired by those who have studied symbolic meaning in organizations, and who have attempted to get below surface examinations of culture. But I have also drawn upon the functionalist perspective when relevant because I have found that at the *Star-Bulletin*, functionalist aspects of culture can also have symbolic meaning. Studies of newspaper organization generally have not used the symbolic approach but have relied more on a functionalist approach that treats culture as a variable; methods such as surveys and structured interviews are the norm. For example, the Readership Institute at Northwestern University's Media Management Center conducted the Impact Study — an unprecedented study of the organizational culture of 90 newspapers across America. About 5,500 employees at all levels in newspapers were surveyed in news, circulation and advertising departments. The study's hypothesis was that there is a relationship between the culture of a newspaper and its readership. The purpose of the study was diagnostic: to determine why readership has been declining since the 1970s, and what newspaper publishers could do to change and improve readership. The definition of organizational culture used in the survey appeared to be drawn from Schein (1992) and others who have advocated a singular, integrationist view of culture. An overview from its report explains:

So what is culture? It is the shared beliefs and values that shape employees' thinking and behaviors — or more colloquially, “the way we do things around here.” Culture is about how people (or departments) are expected to interact with

each other in the workplace. It is not about how staff (or departments) should do their functional or professional jobs.³

The survey was a measurement tool designed by Professor Robert Cooke at the University of Chicago, and it had been completed by more than 2 million employees in over 40 countries. It focused on behavior attributes and the impact of the culture on people and the business.⁴ That study did not focus on subcultures or historical or other determinants of culture. I found that I needed a defined and in-depth method for the study of one newspaper. In a large study such as that one, there was no room for analysis of individual newspapers and their distinct attributes. It was a scientific study whose goal was to generalize and offer help to editors and publishers. It was useful to me because it showed me a study what approach *not* to take for a single newspaper.

Argyris studied a large newspaper in the early 1970s. His groundbreaking book, *Behind the Front Page: Self-Renewal in a Metropolitan Newspaper* (Argyris 1974), focused on diagnosis and change. It was different from other organizational studies in that it focused on the self-examination of the organization. His study preceded the concept of culture as a factor, but referred to the organization as a system with characteristics.

³ http://readership.org/culture_management/culture/inside_culture.htm

⁴ The result of the newspaper survey in the Impact Study was that culture and customer satisfaction were indeed linked. Survey results divided organizational cultures of newspapers into categories — defensive and constructive — and found that 80 percent fell into the defensive category. Constructive cultures were the most successful because they responded to changing markets and technology. Defensive cultures, on the other hand, resisted change.

In his book, he noted that he had both policy and scholarly objectives: “. . .to discover what must be done to create newspapers that are self-examining and self-regulating” and to “add to our knowledge of the processes needed to enhance organizational health and to create effective, on-going renewal activities within organizations” (Argyris 1974: ix). Argyris explained that the editors at the paper had difficulty accepting his behavioral science approach. He notes that one “informant” said the newspaper people would consider such views to be “nonsense” (Argyris: x). The skepticism he dealt with is a common attribute of newspaper people. However, he questioned whether they should be protected by law, i.e. The First Amendment, if they harbor an attitude that they should not have to be self-reflective and develop an open learning system (xii). This was a particular concern because the press in America has earned the label The Fourth Estate because of its protection. Journalists consider themselves to be independent, and their role is to be a watchdog on the powerful. The roots of this independent, lone cowboy attitude that journalists play up, particularly in Hollywood movies, appear to lie in a value system that includes support for the small-town pastoral values, being suspicious of power and supporting the little guy (Gans 1979).

The driving force of Argyris’ study was a theme that continued to plague newspapers three decades later: declining credibility and newspapers’ survival. The reflexive nature of the study was unusual for its time, not just in organization studies but in newspaper studies as well. It has only been since the Watergate era that newspaper

editors have engaged in much self-criticism and self-analysis at annual conferences of groups such as the American Society of Newspaper Editors and the Associated Press Managing Editors. Articles about economic and technological change and the need to improve newspapers' credibility and increase readership have dominated industry trade journals and discussions since then.

Peterson (1992) applied the cultural approach to her study of organizational culture at the *Detroit Free Press*, which focused on “the managerial benefits of understanding culture” — also the title of her article (1992: 123). This study focused on how employees dealt with four years of turmoil caused by court challenges to a Joint Operating Agreement (JOA) with the *Detroit News*. The study's conclusion was that the “essence of the journalistic side of the *Free Press* remained the same, despite fears that the JOA would somehow change its 160-year-old character” (1992: 124). Peterson used Schein's definition of organizational culture, which focused on discovering “patterns of basic assumptions” that employees develop to cope with problems. She was seeking a relationship between culture and the effectiveness of *Free Press* employees in determining their survival. Peterson's study was significant in that it used ethnographic-type methods, such as in-depth interviews and fieldwork that were more typically used on non-newspaper studies. Her study in particular inspired me to investigate Schein's methodology, which served as a starting point for my investigations into different approaches to the study of organizational culture.

Other studies of newspaper culture have also focused on change. Lacy, Sohn and Wicks (1993) developed a textbook of media case studies based on an integrationist view of culture as a variable, but incorporated symbolic meaning as a way to manage culture. According to these scholars, culture can be “changed and defined at any level of the organization. All that is necessary to ‘set’ the culture is agreement and communication on the symbolic meanings by a collective group within a media company” (1993:68). Drawing on Schein’s studies of leadership’s influence on organizational culture, the authors maintain that leaders can communicate culture by controlling reward systems used to motivate employee behavior, giving employees’ action plans to respond to crises, and by communicating ideals and strategies in mission statements. (1993: 68-69).

Rich Somerville (2000) studied newspaper change at the Raleigh (N.C.) *News and Observer*. He used chaos theory in his study of cultural change to study two traumatic shifts over a short period of time when the family-owned newspaper was sold and when leadership changed. Somerville interviewed employees, some of whom were quoted in the study. The study showed “how successful change in one department can have ripple effects” on the whole company and the entire industry (2000: 4).

Karreman and Alvesson (2001) analyzed a Swedish newspaper using qualitative methods and a cultural approach, but only examined one event. They sat in editorial meetings and reported conversations among editors about their possible effect on newspaper sales. In their study, they show how “shared meanings and a joint identification is accomplished, facilitating newspaper editorial work” (2001: 22). The

conversations at one editorial meeting were examined for manifestations of identity construction at the newspaper as they related to decision-making about the daily news product. The study's goal was also methodological: to show that in-depth studies of micro events at an organization can illuminate and increase understanding of that organization. One event would not be enough to illuminate the *Star-Bulletin's* culture in its newsroom.

Young's (1993) dissertation on the *Rocky Mountain News* is a rare ethnographic study of a news organization. She describes how journalists function as organization members as well as the meanings the journalists constructed about the newsroom as an organization (1993: 7). She used participant observation when working as a copy editor at the newspaper to gain an understanding of how the journalists made sense of their roles in the organization. She documents talk — such as conversations, stories and myths — of the journalists. The goal of the study was “to gain insight into how the journalists' values and the organization's culture are able to work in tandem,” and how organizational life affects journalists and the news product (1993:7). My study of the *Star-Bulletin* also focuses on journalists as organization members and it analyzes their stories, but it is different in that it uses a historical symbolic frame for understanding the content of the narratives, which are solicited through interviews rather than by participant observation.

Gade and Perry conducted a study that focused on leadership values and cultural change at the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. Gade later did a study of organizational change in the newspaper industry at a time when newspapers were restructuring. Mail surveys were

sent to 457 journalists from 17 newspapers that he considered leaders of change in the industry. The study was significant because of its size and focus on industry-wide cultural transformation rather than on one organization. Results were seen as generalizable, in accordance with the quantitative approach used.

The previous review shows that most newspaper studies have been functionalist, particularly because they have focused on a managerial view that seeks diagnosis. They have used both quantitative and qualitative methods. My study of the *Star-Bulletin* adds to the research on organizational culture in newspapers because it integrates symbolic and functionalist approaches as a third approach. It is also historically informed, assumes that organizations have shared and unshared meanings, and that culture and identity can be unstable. Generally, however, the study looks for shared meanings as expressions of culture.

In the section below, I show how the study of organizational culture has grown, and why scholars are increasingly turning to culture as an informative and meaningful way to understand organizations.

The Cultural Studies Trend and My Position

Scholars have been studying cultural phenomena since the 1930s, but the cultural approach to the study of organizations became popular in the 1980s with Peters and Waterman's *In Search of Excellence* (1982), Ouchi's *Theory Z* (1981), and Deal and Kennedy's *Corporate Cultures* (1982, 1988). These studies took a functionalist approach

in which culture was a variable to be managed to support the strategy of the firm and to improve performance. This was not completely new thinking about organizational culture; it had its roots in sociological and psychological work starting with Taylor and Weber, and in anthropological studies in the 1930s (Trice and Beyer 1993; Parker 2001). In the 1930s, the Hawthorne studies at the Western Electric Company of Chicago introduced cultural methods of observation and interviewing by a group of scholars, one of them being anthropologist W. Lloyd Warner. In 1944 William Foote Whyte, one of Warner's students, studied the restaurant industry in Boston using the cultural approach (Trice & Beyer 1993). According to Hofstede, the term "organizational culture" did not appear until Andrew Pettigrew introduced the term in U.S. academic literature with an article in 1979 titled "On Studying Organizational Cultures" in *Administrative Science Quarterly* (Hofstede et. al 1990).

Qualitative methods fell out of favor during the 1950s, '60s and '70s but reemerged in the 1980s among scholars as a result of executives' concern with foreign competition and productivity problems. Significantly, scholars began to realize that something was missing from the rational approaches to studying organizational culture and became disillusioned with quantitative methods (Trice & Beyer 1993). In the 1980s, with the downturn in the U.S. economy, managers were more keenly focused on international performance. Scholars studying organizational culture for the benefit of these managers found that organizational culture was much more complex than researchers had assumed. They felt that the scientific method lacked the depth and insight

necessary to understand these complexities. It was not so easy to manage culture, and there could be multiple and contradictory cultures rather than one identifiable culture. Scholars began using qualitative methods which, though messier and complex, attempted to get below the surface of cultural phenomena. Scholars looked beyond defined job tasks and managerial statements to locate culture and attempted to engage symbolism as a powerful means to locate meaning. In another important shift, they studied culture simply to gain knowledge, rather than for diagnostic reasons alone. In effect, the cultural perspective changed the way researchers studied organizations. Alvesson and Berg (1992: 20) state that they believe the “breakthrough of culture has contributed to the weakening of the objectivist position in organizational research.” They call this “the retreat of positivism.”

Alvesson and Berg advocated the symbolic perspective, first illuminated by Smircich in 1983, as the most effective way to understand an organization because of its power to locate meaning. This approach, which had roots in Europe and had been considered avant-garde, has become more mainstream among scholars. Despite its growing acceptance, researchers still seem unsatisfied with a single approach. Some of the key researchers in the field study an organization from several perspectives and methods in the hopes of best revealing the organization’s culture(s).

For example, Martin (1992, 2002) applies her three perspectives — integration, differentiation and fragmentation — in a systematic way to the study of an organization, then engages in a self-critique of why even the three-perspective approach has its

limitations. Schultz (1994) understands cultural perspectives in functionalist and symbolic terms, and applies each to a systematic, theoretical and empirical analysis of an organization's culture. Schultz attempts to clarify the functionalist and symbolic approaches by posing key questions (Schultz 1994: 150) below. The symbolic approach is No. 2 in boldface.

Key analytical question:

1. What are the functions of culture for organizational survival? (functionalism);
- 2. What is the meaning of the organization to its members? (symbolism).**

Analytical assumption

1. Culture develops through organizational problem-solving (functionalism);
- 2. Culture is created as ongoing construction and reconstruction of meaning (symbolism).**

Analytical framework

1. Universal framework: the levels and functions of culture (functionalism);
- 2. Context specific and organization specific (symbolism).**

Analytical method

1. Clinical (functionalism);
- 2. Ethnographic (symbolism).**

Analytical result

1. Theoretical models emphasizing general characteristics (functionalism);
- 2. Narrative text exploring uniqueness (symbolism).**

Analytical insight

1. Diagnosis (functionalism);
2. **Understanding (symbolism).**

My study generally follows the symbolic approach listed as the No. 2 items above, but integrates it with functionalism when I examine the functions of culture and identity as they pertain to survival. I do this because I look for connections between the theory and the narratives rather than try to separate theories into categories for utility and linear neatness. I analyze functionalist aspects in the narratives when they become meaningful for those individuals interviewed. For example, functionalist studies focus on how culture is created when members of an organization face a crisis over survival. (Trice and Beyer 1993). Schein (1992) and Frost, et al. (1985) are helpful when examining the crisis conditions at the *Star-Bulletin* during the 18 months when it was up for sale because they examine culture in terms of how members coped. Narratives in my study that contain stories about how members solved problems or coped with a crisis can also be interpreted within a symbolic framework that seeks constructed or shared meanings among members interviewed. Functionalism would also tie the members' ability to solve problems with performance and survival. Advocates of this more functionalist approach seek to uncover causal relationships between forms of organizational culture and performance to produce knowledge that helps members achieve beneficial outcomes (Alvesson 2002). Also, ownership, leadership, job duties,

structure, journalism's occupational culture and newspaper structure and production routines have played important roles in the history and creation of the organizational culture of the *Star-Bulletin* (Trice and Beyer 1993), and in its performance and survival. The physical space in which the employees produced the newspaper shaped culture, particularly in terms of communication across an open or closed newsroom. And, the materiality of the newspaper as a physical product is also discussed in terms of identity construction. These aspects must be analyzed within an integrated framework.

A general label for my integrated approach is interpretivist — how the members and I subjectively interpret their experiences within the organizational context through stories. In this way the study in part is inspired by Czarniawska's (1997, 1998) view that the organization is revealed through stories.

My study of the *Star-Bulletin* also draws on Martin's three perspectives, which she says complement each other. Here I briefly describe her perspectives, then explain how I use them. Her *integration* perspective focuses on seeking consistent manifestations of culture. Consensus is the norm, and culture is "that which is clear. Ambiguity is excluded" (Martin 2002: 94). In her *differentiation* perspective, there may be subcultures where consensus exists and there may be inconsistency. "Subcultures are like islands of clarity in a sea of ambiguity" (Martin 2002: 94). The *fragmentation* perspective focuses on inconsistencies and ambiguity. "Interpretations of cultural manifestations are ambiguously related to each other, placing ambiguity, rather than clarity, at the core of the culture" (Martin 2002: 94). Martin's fragmentation perspective "connects individuals

in temporary, issue-specific coalitions” (1992: 153). Cultural manifestations are neither consistent nor inconsistent (2002). Consensus is “transient and issue-specific.” (2002). The fragmentation perspective is useful in the discussion later of local identity and what this means for *Star-Bulletin* interviewees because it illuminates the complexity of the term “local” in their discourse. This perspective allows us to see that local identity as a contested concept is interpreted by the employees in very personal, self-identifying terms that exclude certain groups, depending on the interviewee’s background as a Caucasian, Asian-American or Hawaiian.

I employ her integrationist perspective when I seek to understand the organizational culture of the *Star-Bulletin* as manifested in *shared meanings* among members in the editorial department. But my study differs from other integrationist studies because it does not present only the viewpoint of management or those in power (Martin 1992), which is a common characteristic of such studies. They ignore the subjectivity of the researcher and the voices of those without power or who do not adhere to the main management line. My study also rejects other aspects of the integrationist view that focus on consensus because it accepts ambiguity and conflict. In this study of the *Star-Bulletin*, the stories that employees tell are analyzed for manifestations of symbolic meaning that are *shared* — as well as some that are not shared — and interpreted by those interviewed and by me. My study does not limit the analysis to seeking one culture. Rather, it uses Martin’s differentiation perspective in which inconsistencies in stories are recognized, and subcultures are identified. This perspective

is particularly applicable to the discussion of local identity and to the different tasks and sections of the newsroom, such as sports and news. When inconsistencies seem to be specific to certain individuals, they are still worth acknowledging as expressions of the culture. Schein (1992), on the other hand, would disregard them. He believes that only what is shared is, by definition, cultural. If there is no consensus or if there is conflict or if things are ambiguous, then the group studied “does not have a culture with regard to those things.” But my study acknowledges these differences because they may have implications that have to do with power relationships, for example, between owners and employees.

Definitions of Organizational Culture

A cultural study of an organization must be grounded in a definition of organizational culture. There are as many definitions as there are perspectives on how to study organizational culture, and some are more limiting than others. Some scholars study culture as emerging to solve problems or cope with situations; others focus on studying culture study only as a projection of the mind’s unconscious universe. Classical management theorists see culture as serving basic human needs; it is focused on task accomplishment. For those inspired by Geertz’ (1973) symbolic anthropology, culture is a system of shared symbols and meanings that are interpreted through examination of cultural artifacts such as physical settings, rituals, myths, stories and legends. Symbols

also occur in the ideology of the group's members and in the history and environment of the organization.

The definition I use in this study follows the view that places culture in organizations because organizations are settings where shared meanings emerge. This is essentially Smircich's definition of culture as well as Martin's, who see culture as a lens for studying organizational life at the *Star-Bulletin*. However, my study acknowledges that people bring to the organization a multitude of personal attributes, such as personality, cultural-ethnic experience and worldview. Here is Smircich's definition (1983: 56):

In a particular situation the set of meanings that evolves gives a group its own ethos, or distinctive character, which is expressed in patterns of belief (ideology), activity (norms and rituals), language and other symbolic forms through which organization members both create and sustain their view of the world and image of themselves in the world. The development of a world view with its shared understanding of group identity, purpose, and direction are products of the unique history, personal interactions, and environmental circumstances of the group. Yet the particular worldview may continue to shape organizational existence long after the key actors have departed from the scene and environmental conditions have changed. Acknowledgment of this provides the impetus for the study of the symbolic processes which facilitate the continued existence of particular organizational realities.

For Martin: “*Culture* can be defined as patterns of interpretation composed of the meanings associated with various cultural manifestations, such as stories, rituals, formal and informal practices, jargon, and physical arrangements” (Martin 2002: 330). She explains that the researcher may see patterns of meaning that may not necessarily be shared. “The cultural observer . . . seeks an indepth understanding of the patterns of meanings that link these manifestations (cultural artifacts) together, sometimes in harmony, sometimes in bitter conflict between groups, and sometimes in webs of ambiguity, paradox, and contradiction” (Martin 2002: 3 & 58). As a researcher, being open to conflict and ambiguity in stories will result in a less tidy study of the *Star-Bulletin*, but one that is more complete.

Frost’s (Frost, et al. 1985:7) definition of culture is also useful in my study. “Talking about organizational culture seems to mean talking about the importance for people of symbolism — of rituals, myths, stories and legends — and about the interpretation of events, ideas, and experiences that are influenced and shaped by the groups within which they live.”

I also draw upon Martin’s nexus theory, which gives me more freedom in interpreting a variety of influences that have shaped the culture of the *Star-Bulletin*, as expressed by the interviewees. The *Star-Bulletin*’s organizational culture can be seen as a microcosm of influences within a boundary — something Martin calls a “nexus” of cultural influences (1992: 111). Organizational culture is used as a general term in this

study while acknowledging the possibility of multiple cultures. The word “organizational” is used as an adjective implying culture(s) that is “organized” in some way. In this study, the organization is defined as containing the membership of the newspaper; that is, the boundary is drawn around the staff members who are employed by the *Honolulu Star-Bulletin* and who consider themselves to be involved in some way in the editorial side of the paper, as opposed to the business, advertising or circulation sections.

As a community newspaper, the *Star-Bulletin* has a permeable boundary because its institutional goal is to inform citizens through interaction with them and their institutions. Citizens can also publish in the newspaper, although the editors control who gets published. This relationship with the local community helps shape the *Star-Bulletin* as a culture that reflects the local community, as we see later in the stories told by participants. Alvesson (2002: 159) says an organization is “a site of local culture” as well as a “reflection of macro culture.” Occupational, professional, structural and environmental influences create a strong imprint. These many forces must be understood in the historical context — in this case Hawai‘i’s colonial relationship with the U.S. mainland. These colonizing influences create an interconnected set of meanings for the members of the *Star-Bulletin*, as we see later in their narratives.

The cultural approach utilized in this study considers an analysis of the context in which an organization finds itself to be essential to an understanding of that organization.

A historically informed, contextual understanding will produce a perspective that's different from one devoid of context, as Nord (1985) notes.

One of the most useful contributions that the concept of culture can make to our field may be that it induces a historical perspective. . . the desire to understand a system's culture drives one to a concern with the process by which the past has been mapped into or stored in the present (Nord in Frost et al. 1985: 191).

This study is also concerned with *the process* by which the past has come to influence the *Star-Bulletin's* organizational culture — that is, the impact on the paper of the importation into Hawai'i of foreign institutions, occupations and values. Smircich's definition of organizational culture used in this study supports this process view as does Martin's nexus theory. Participants in the study will share stories that demonstrate their relationships with the community and the newspaper's interconnectedness with Hawai'i's history and environment. These stories will contain symbolically loaded reference points organized in time.

This study of the *Star-Bulletin* also applies Kent's (1993) dependency theory of the colonization of Hawai'i to gain perspective on the history of the *Star-Bulletin* and the process that helped to shape its culture as well as investigate the context within which the storytellers relate their tales. This theory supports the historically informed, cultural approach to the study of an organization that acknowledges the external forces and connections that shaped the *Star-Bulletin*. As Kent (1993) says in his appropriately titled

book, *Hawaii: Islands Under the Influence*, “Hawaii, from the moment of Captain James Cook’s landfall on January 18, 1778, had been a pawn of world economic forces directed from the European, American and Asian continents” (p. ix). Kent (1993) argues that Hawai‘i’s development has been “*peripheral in nature*,” a reflex of expansionist needs that have been controlled from the center (p. 5), in this case, the U.S. mainland. The *Star-Bulletin*’s organizational culture reflects the connections that have tied it as an influential Hawai‘i institution to the center from which its American-style journalism and values were imported.

Viewing culture broadly as a shared and learned world of experiences, meanings, values and understandings which are communicated at least partly in symbolic form is consistent with a variety of approaches used in the study of organizational culture (Alvesson 2002: 6). After examining all these approaches, I have combined several of them while acknowledging their shortcomings for my study.

The integrated approach I describe above will be supported by a story analysis that draws on the web of meanings expressed by participants. Calling this methodological approach a “web” fits well in a study of meanings in culture because of their complex nature. Martin (2002), Schultz (1994), Geertz (1973) and Smircich (1985) use the image of a web to describe interrelated meanings that result from interpretations by members of the culture (or cultures).

Organizational Identity

An important aspect of this study of organizational culture is an analysis of the connections between the creation and existence of organizational culture at the *Star-Bulletin* and the social construction of shared identity by its members. Definitions of organizational culture allude to the role of meaning construction in creating a shared identity. For example, Smircich says: “In a particular situation the set of meanings that evolves gives a group its own ethos, or distinctive character. . .” Trice and Beyer explain that cultures are created by individuals interacting with one another, and in doing so, create a collective identity. “They are aware, at some level, of the similarities that they and other members share and how this makes them different from others. They, in effect, develop some degree of consciousness and pride in what makes their group unique” (Trice and Beyer 1993; Martin, et al. 1983).

Identity defines who and what organizational members see themselves as in relation to the society they belong to. In the case of the *Star-Bulletin*, this society includes the national and local media community, and in particular, the *Advertiser*. The social construction of identity is a key aspect of the *Star-Bulletin* study because of its connections with organizational culture. Martin connects culture with identity by explaining that culture can be seen as aspects of people’s collective lives that represent their attempts to make sense of their experiences:

In this regard, people belong to multiple, overlapping, nested cultural identities. The content of these cultural identities . . . is subjectively experienced and to some extent socially constructed (Martin 2002: 330).

People develop a sense of common identity as they interact with each other in an organization, according to Trice and Beyer (1993). Gioia (1998) links individual identity with organizational identity. People see themselves as distinct individuals while also comparing themselves with others. Citing Tajfel (1982), he notes that groups also like to distinguish themselves from others. “Tajfel’s work suggests a good basis for building bridges from individual to organizational conceptualizations of identity” (1998: 19). Gioia calls the “leap to organizational identity” a “straightforward leap upward in level of analysis” (1998:20). Identity captures the essential features of an organization. He quotes Albert and Whetten (1985: 264), who summarize organizational identity in three dimensions:

(a) what is taken by an organization members to be *central* to the organization; (b) what makes the organization *distinctive* from other organizations (at least in the eyes of the beholding members); and (c) what is perceived by members to be *enduring* or continuing features linking the present organization with the past (and presumably the future).

What also complicates these dimensions is that identity can be unstable because owners, key leaders and circumstances change over time. The history, politics, economics and culture of the community in which the organization exists have an important impact on individual and organizational identity and culture creation. The narratives will be analyzed with this instability in mind. There may not always be a shared frame of reference. For example, oldtimers may have a different understanding than do relative newcomers about what it was like to work at the newspaper 50 years ago because their experiences reflect a certain period in time. Both time and physical office space influence perspectives, as we see later. The staff members talk about a specific period in the history of the *Star-Bulletin* in terms of the events of the day, their physical surroundings, and their daily deadlines.

Interviewees talk about what they think is central to themselves and the *Star-Bulletin* and about what makes them special and distinct, especially in their relationship to the *Advertiser*. This latter point relates to a key goal of the study — the qualities and distinctiveness that enabled the paper to survive and avoid closure. The “enduring” features of the organization are key to an understanding also of its survival, and will surface in the stories that reflect on the changes in the *Star-Bulletin* since David Black took ownership in 2001. What’s important to remember is that the participants *believe* these aspects to be true — for example why they are distinct from the *Advertiser* — rather than some reality imposed by me or other outsiders who indeed may not be able to distinguish between the *Advertiser* and the *Star-Bulletin*. In this respect, their tales

become *authentic* and are significant in the construction of meaning and identity at the newspaper.

It is also important to remember that the concept of identity is contested. Is it really enduring, distinctive and central, as Albert and Whetten believe (1985)? Could it be unstable and change over time, and can it be interpreted by different members of the organization, depending on their position in the organization, time spent there and individual experiences? This issue is faced during the analysis, which will reveal that the participants do indeed tell stories that show aspects of a shared and distinctive identity, albeit not always stable. Evidence from the interviews is weighed to interpret the *Star-Bulletin's* enduring and central features and distinctiveness. It shows that some aspects of identity have endured while others have shifted over time.

I also draw on Trice and Beyer (1993), who discuss identity in terms of occupational subcultures. The journalism occupation becomes highly relevant to the *Star-Bulletin* because the newsroom is dominated by journalism professionals who strongly adhere to the practice and values of American journalism culture. In addition, the newspaper has tasks and duties and areas of expertise that help determine subcultures at the paper. For example, reporters share a culture and values that are different from those of copy editors or photographers; sports department journalists form another subculture that is distinct from that of City Hall reporters and so on. However, these subcultures may not be unique to the *Star-Bulletin*, but are common at all papers. They are worth noting in

the analysis, however, for they are part of the web of shared meanings and understandings that individuals construct in their narratives.

Feldman (1991) addresses the issue of non-uniform values in an organization and whether a culture can be defined when values differ on the same issue. He suggests that “we look to the existence of a common frame of reference or a shared recognition of relevant issues...They may array themselves differently with respect to that issue, but whether positively or negatively, they are all oriented to it” (Feldman 1991: 154 as cited in Frost, et al. in Martin 2002). This notion is helpful in my study because several members from different subcultures might describe a leader from viewpoints while agreeing on his influence on the newsroom. The shared stories and events will be the focus of the analysis exactly because they are shared; the different viewpoints can be discussed within the differentiation perspective. Either way, they are significant for members and have symbolic value and create shared identity.

Aspects of the creation of the newspaper’s organizational culture will be discussed outside the narratives as well if they are not included in the narratives. For example, some discussion of the colonial history of Hawai‘i and its impact on the *Star-Bulletin* is necessary for an understanding of the events and heroes expressed in stories, and of the cultural environment of Hawai‘i.

In the chapter that follows, I discuss my research design, method, my role as a “reflexive researcher” and the impact this has on the study’s outcome.

CHAPTER 2 RESEARCH DESIGN, METHOD AND REFLECTION

The Tension of the Reflexive Researcher: Issues in Conducting Organizational Research

In studies of organizational culture, the role of the researcher's close involvement with participants has become a fashionable topic for discussion. This interest arose after a group of scholars began moving away from the scientific methods prevalent in management studies and into ethnographic-style qualitative methods and approaches that have been inspired by anthropology and sociology. Participant observation, interviews and field research all require intimate involvement by the researcher. Questions of the ethics of the researcher, objectivity and the researcher's viewpoint as an insider or outsider dominate concerns about how organizational culture should be studied. Discussions about the researcher's bias, assumptions and values are discussed as an honest way to lend validity to a study. "When we do organizational research, we can't avoid telling the world something about who we are," according to Adams and Ingersoll (in Frost et al. 1985: 225).

Scholars who follow the cultural approach to studying organizational culture have, since the 1980s, accepted in a positive way the reflexive role of the researcher in participation in the study and analysis of the organization. Unlike studies that use the scientific method, the researcher need not keep her distance or maintain an objective stance because this is seen as detracting from a complete understanding of the culture studied. These scholars believe that the study is enriched by the researcher's

acknowledgement of who she is, her impact on the study itself, and that she complements the study by providing both an outsider (*etic*) and insider (*emic*) point of view (Frost et al. 1985; Martin 2002; Czarniawska 1998). Martin (2002) explains that both have value. If the researcher positions herself in the *etic* viewpoint, she may take a more positivistic approach, use questionnaires or structured interviews, and seek to generalize about an organization. An *emic* research position, on the other hand, avoids imposing a category system, and instead uses more unstructured interviewing, participant observation or other qualitative techniques. However, there doesn't have to be a rigid dichotomy between *etic* and *emic*; there is no reason why a researcher cannot use both, shift between the two, or find a third position. The reflexive researcher, in acknowledging her biases, assumptions and her sometimes *etic* and sometimes *emic* position, opens the door for a richer understanding of the text as well. The mobility of the researcher has been applied in anthropological and feminist studies. Bloom (1998) says that feminist methodology — methods grounded in feminist theory — demands the freedom of mobility. She explains that feminist methodology “encourages interpersonal and reciprocal relationships between researchers and the participants, and it breaks down traditional binary constructions of subjectivity in the researcher relationship” (Bloom 1998: 137).

The methodology that drives this study has been partly inspired by the freedom that mobility in one's position gives the researcher to find a new position. Interestingly, this mobility also gives me the freedom to reconstruct my own identity as well as the constructed identity of the *Star-Bulletin* as I progress through the interviews and the

analysis of the study. This point is a particularly important aspect of my study because of the synergy between the symbolic perspective and functionalist approach, which is essentially a tension between the emic and etic positioning of the researcher. A journalistic, rational, functionalist approach and methods require the etic position, while a cultural, symbolic approach prefers the emic position. Yet it is the mobility between the two positions and their methods and the synergy these create in a third position that will provide the richest understanding.

In Chapter 1 I allude to the freedom that an academic, theory-driven approach using qualitative methods gives me. This is the freedom to invite the participant into the interview as a conversation about his or her experiences and life at the *Star-Bulletin*, to read over the text of our conversation and add interpretation or clarification to it. Journalists frown on inviting the interviewee to examine stories or notes; the journalist must maintain distance and seek balance and fairness in a story if it is to be credible and accepted by the public. A few of the journalists in my study refused to see the text of their interview because they didn't want to be perceived as "manipulating" what I am writing because, according to journalistic ethics, that would hurt the credibility of the study. However, there were some who did make changes or asked me not to include some statements that they were worried might damage their reputations. So, this method also forced me to give up some control over the transcripts. It was a challenge to maintain an open, trusting relationship with interviewees while analyzing their stories within a

theoretical framework. I chose to honestly represent their stories while being mindful of how I was representing their stories within themes that framed the analysis.

Author Janet Malcolm (1990)⁵ explores the nature of the journalist as an interview subject. She notes that even though the journalist interviewed by her knew “the game backward and forward,” he still felt compelled to “play the role of the subject,” and engaged in a type of confession, “impelled by something stronger than reason” (1990: 8). The *Star-Bulletin* interviewees sometimes backtracked when they reviewed their transcripts, and crossed out information or asked me not to use it. Generally, however, most abided by the rules they followed when they conducted their own interviews and made few changes to their transcripts, even though I explained to them that they should consider this to be an on-going conversation between us. But this study uses many of journalism’s tools, such as interviews and critical analysis of the text but has a different purpose; my role is not to act as a watchdog for the public. My study is for public consumption but is being done to create understanding and a story of an important time in the *Star-Bulletin*’s history. Interviewees are participants — they help create the story. The fact that most are journalists is a huge added bonus because storytelling is their craft. They are telling stories about the story of the *Star-Bulletin*.

The privacy of the participants was respected in this study because of the requirements of the Institutional Review Board’s Committee on Human Subjects at the

⁵ Malcolm interviewed Joe McGinnis, author of *Fatal Vision*, who was sued in 1984 for writing a negative version of the murder trial of Jeffrey MacDonald.

University of Hawai'i. Anonymity and confidentiality were offered to participants, and all quotes were checked with interviewees, who could request that certain quotes or information not be attributed to them. Most information was included unless there were privacy concerns, such as those related to job hiring and firing or health issues. In this way this approach is more restrictive than the methods of journalism, which allow the reporter to quote sources and interpret information as she sees fit. Of course, she is obligated to be an ethical reporter and adhere to the Society of Professional Journalists' code of ethics that insists on accuracy, balance and fairness in stories. These differences between the pragmatic practice of journalism and the scholarly practice of conducting an academic study were explained to the interviewees so that they felt comfortable with the new ground rules and as a way to earn their trust.

Trust and gaining access

Gaining access to an organization and earning the trust of the participants are two key issues in any study of an organization, particularly one in which interviews are used instead of surveys, the less intimate instrument. One significant advantage I have in conducting this study is my easy access to participants and their trust in me because my husband was News Editor at the newspaper at the time I conducted the interviews and had worked there since 1986 in both union and management positions. They also trusted me because I got to know them personally through their Christmas parties and through my teaching position at the University of Hawai'i journalism department. They have been

involved with my teaching by taking my students on tours of the newsroom and “back shop” production area every year since 1991, and many of my former students are working there or have been interns. In addition, many of the journalists at the *Star-Bulletin* are alumni of the journalism department at UH and have acted as guest speakers in my classes. I have had a few stories published in the *Star-Bulletin*, and was a reporter and a copy editor at several daily newspapers in Canada before I joined the University of Hawai‘i.

I believe that my background as a journalist and as an acquaintance of the interviewees lends credibility to the study. My credibility is also enhanced because I have spent years earning the trust of the participants that proved beneficial in the many conversations I had with them over a period of about three years. This close relationship, however, can also have its drawbacks. My sympathetic, journalistic, emic viewpoint will undoubtedly influence my perspective to some extent. The techniques of journalism have been helpful in interviewing and organizing the massive amounts of stories. In addition, I have been a scholar long enough to apply a different lens in my analysis of this newsroom’s culture. The symbolic, cultural approach I take in this study has helped me see the organizational culture of the *Star-Bulletin* from outside the traditional, more condensed journalistic lens that’s affected by daily deadlines and a short time frame. In the end, I will still be the author of this research and will maintain a scholarly identity throughout the process of conducting this study. And, an added benefit will be the

opportunity the research process gives me to reconsider the whole culture of news in America through a different frame.

Martin (2002: 169) argues that organizational culture studies are value-laden and, despite claims to the contrary, serve particular interests that should be acknowledged. Before I begin an analysis of the stories told to me by the participants, I feel I must acknowledge my interests in this study. My questions for the interviewees were framed with the survival of the paper in mind; I do believe that Hawai'i is better served by having two major daily newspapers in town. I wanted the *Star-Bulletin* to survive also to save the employees' jobs and provide future opportunities for journalism students.

Method

The question of which methods and techniques to use in studying an organization is always a difficult one for cultural researchers because the field is so broad. Czarniawska's approach sheds some light on this question. In her book, *A Narrative Approach to Organization Studies*, she says that ". . . there is no method, strictly speaking, in social sciences. All there is are other works as sources of inspiration, an array of various techniques, and a systematic reflection on the work that is being done" (1998: vi). I would add that this "array of techniques" needs to be driven by the assumptions and approaches that underlie the study. This study is driven mainly by the symbolic approach, although it is integrated with the functionalist perspective, as I have described earlier. Therefore the methods and techniques will reflect this combined, third

approach. The primary tool is the interview to gather stories as “data”; secondarily, there is participant observation in the newsroom. Also, some published texts are used to document events at certain times in the history of the *Star-Bulletin*. Following Czarniawska (1998), Martin (2002) and Bloom (1998), an important part of this study is the systematic reflection that I and the participants will engage in as part of the analysis.

Use of stories and narratives

Gathering stories in organizational research has, in recent years, become a more legitimate and acceptable approach to the study of organizations. Researchers tend to use stories in different ways. Some use the label “story” in a narrow sense. Their research questions are highly focused and seek stories from participants about specific events, themes or power relationships (Gabriel 1998, Wilkins 1983). The word “story” is used in different ways and is sometimes equated with myth or saga (Gabriel 1998; Alvesson and Berg 1992). Czarniawska uses the term “narratives” to describe these tales, and analyzes them using literary techniques that focus on plot, actors and action (Czarniawska 1997). Barley (1983) employed a linguistically oriented semiotic approach in his study of funeral work to create a map of a code structure of language used by workers in a funeral home. All approaches referred to seek symbolic meaning in the stories they gather in interviews but do with different methodologies.

People use stories to make sense of their experiences and to express their feelings and beliefs (Trice and Beyer 1993, Gabriel 1998). Buker (1987) interpreted narratives to

gain insight into political cultures in two communities, and Czarniawska (1997, 1998) studied the narrative structure of stories in her studies of Swedish government agencies. I preferred a non-literary technique that focused more on the content and symbolic meaning of the stories rather than their structure. For example, the stories told by the journalists are sometimes about stories that have been published in the *Star-Bulletin*. As such, these stories have symbolic meaning for the participants; they have symbolic meaning about the culture and identity of the organization, but their content is about other organizations and issues in the community.

Martin is well known among organizational culture scholars for her use of stories, particularly in her 1992 three-perspective study of OZCO, a large multinational, high-tech company. Martin presented the stories to readers as they were, with little interpretation by her although she had a clear research agenda in that she was attuned to the participants' differing perspectives. Most scholars, however, tend to use stories as samples to support a perspective of an organization, or in an attempt to interpret certain aspects of the culture of the organization depending on their research agenda. Full transcripts of stories are not provided; readers are not invited to make judgments for themselves, but rather are led through an interpretation that is framed by the scholar's assumptions and methods. For example, Karreman's study of a Swedish newspaper focused only on daily editorial meetings, called "news bills," in which the content of each day's newspaper was decided. He specifically sought to determine how narrated stories or conversations in the meetings led to a socially constructed identity among members of

the organization. (Karreman 2001). He did not discuss other aspects of the newsroom, or listen to conversations by other newsroom employees, but used stories in a more limited way and interpreted them as the observer-scholar studying organizational identity.

Gabriel (1998) points out that stories are a powerful tool because they “open valuable windows into the emotional and symbolic lives of organizations” (p. 135). He says they are “emotionally and symbolically charged narratives” that “infuse facts with meaning” (p. 136). Gabriel (1998) notes:

By collecting stories in a particular organization, by listening and comparing different accounts, by investigating how narratives are constructed around specific events, by examining which events in an organization’s history generate stories and which ones fail to do so, we gain access to deeper realities, closely linked to their members’ experiences (pp. 135-136).

Gathering stories and then analyzing them in the symbolic perspective allows me to engage in the emotions and meanings in the stories, rather than simply communicate “just the facts.” It presents an opportunity to be sensitive to how others respond to me while listening with understanding to them talk about their lives at the organization. Listening with understanding also means that the interviewees, many of whom are or were journalists, perceived the goal of the interview as fact-gathering because this is precisely why they conduct interviews – to gather information, tell a fair and balanced story and get the record straight. Pinch (2000) explains Czarniawska’s understanding of

the positioning of the researcher vis-à-vis the narratives and their relationship to shared meaning and identity:

In positioning our own narratives, we are sensitive to and respond to the narratives of others and how others respond to us. Narratives are ways of tapping into a shared social set of meanings. Ultimately, identities and how they get constructed are also matters of narratives (Pinch 2000).

The questions that participants responded to were not entirely open-ended because stories were elicited from participants. But, participants were given a list of questions to ponder in advance, and they were asked to recollect. Recollection may not be a reliable method of recording research data, but I argue that reliability is not the most central issue when the study aims to gather life experiences as told in stories. Indeed, recollection, reflection and interpretation are an integral part of the research process.

Authenticity vs. accuracy

The interviews gathered as “data” in this study are reported here as “authentic.” They are the best accounts the interviewee could give. Silverman (2002) notes that the aim in qualitative research is “to gather an authentic understanding of people’s experiences.” However, it must also be understood that what is authentic in this study already has been framed by the research topic and interview questions (Silverman 2002). Open-ended questions are seen to be the most effective way to accomplish authenticity.

In this study, both open-ended and more defined questions were presented to participants. These are discussed later in more depth.

Symon and Cassell (1998: 7) also discuss Guba and Lincoln's (1989) authenticity criteria to justify their interpretations of their data in some way. In my study, the interviewees will be telling stories about events, heroes, history and other significant life experiences. These will become transcribed as texts that are *authentic* accounts of the experiences of these individuals. Stories appear as they have been transcribed with interpretation by the tellers of the tales and by me. One story may be told in different ways by many participants. But this does not mean that one account is necessarily more accurate than another except where certain facts, such as dates, occur; rather, each account is authentic in its own right. Each provides insights into the organizational culture and identity of the *Star-Bulletin* as constructed by the participants although the focus on one topic that's shared by many interviewees may have shared symbolic significance.

These stories do not constitute an objective history of the organization, even though they have information in common with facts of history. They are socially constructed accounts that reflect selectivity and incomplete recall, and they are interpreted and reinterpreted by the individuals (Berger and Luckmann 1966). The stories become reference points that might symbolize as much about the circumstances at the time the story was told as they did about the historical event and relationships themselves. For example, nostalgic stories told about the *Star-Bulletin*'s family-like

atmosphere created by the editor during the 1940s and 1950s or about the freedom reporters had in their reporting after Gannett sold the *Star-Bulletin* in 1993 were symbolic of the loss of some of these valued aspects of the culture after the paper changed ownership.

Interview questions

Whether interview questions should be structured or open-ended depends on the goal of the study. This study is focused on discovering expressions of culture and identity in the participants' life experiences in the newsroom at the *Star-Bulletin*. It attempts to understand the *Star-Bulletin* in the historical context of its survival, so the questions are focused with that research agenda in mind. Because these were journalists and experienced interviewers themselves, they expected specific questions. I provided these in advance. Some were uncomfortable with an unstructured interview and asked, "What do you want to know?" Or, they said, "I'm not sure this is what you're looking for." Some would refer me to others who were "more knowledgeable" about something as if their stories weren't "accurate enough."

Interviewees were given a description of the study and its goals, as well as 29 questions (see appendix). Some were open-ended, such as: "What was it like to work there?" Others were specific, and asked participants to talk about key leaders or work routines. The questions represented an integration of a functionalist approach, in which specific factual information is sought, and a symbolic approach, in which interviewees

are encouraged to tell stories about their experiences. The analysis reflects this integration.

The creation of interview questions was based on a survey of studies of organizational culture that used interviews, and is appropriate because it follows typical questions used in these studies (Hofstede et al., 1990; Schein 1999; Martin 1992, 2002, Sneider 1990). Some of these reflect ethnographic approaches common in anthropological studies, which examine cultural artifacts such as rituals, legends, heroes and so on. Others reflect a management approach that examines ownership, leadership and organizational structure and hierarchy. Typically, small samples are used and specific aspects of organizations are studied. Large qualitative studies of organizations are considered to be huge undertakings that few have tried. Alvesson (2002) has called for more large-scale cultural studies of organizations, but as they are difficult, expensive and time-consuming, the norm among scholars has been to conduct smaller, focused studies.

Questions were designed to encourage the interviewee to talk about cultural manifestations that could have symbolic meaning. Scholars use a variety of terms such as cultural artifacts, manifestations or phenomena to describe aspects of organizational culture. Definitions of what constitutes cultural artifacts or manifestations abound, but there are general categories that are commonly used in studies of organizational culture. Trice and Beyer (1993) divide these into ideologies and cultural forms such as physical setting, rituals and stories. I prefer to call all these manifestations “expressions” of culture because forms can symbolically represent ideologies and values, so the two should not be

separated. For example, the physical design of the newsroom represents the ideologies of the leadership, ownership and workflow of journalism.

The questions were grouped into several themes:

- 1) Journalism ideology and values;
- 2) History: Participants were asked about their personal history and what it was like at the time they arrived. They were also asked to identify key events in the history of the paper, such as famous stories published;
- 3) The business of journalism;
- 4) Ownership and its influence on the paper;
- 5) Leadership and its influence on the newsroom in particular;
- 6) Management and its style;
- 7) Heroes;
- 8) Key events;
- 9) Organizational structure;
- 10) Subcultures, for example, sports and features;
- 11) Work routines and workflow;
- 12) Physical setting;
- 13) Influence of Hawai'i on being a journalist;
- 14) *Star-Bulletin's* relationship with the *Advertiser*.
- 15) Rituals, such as hiring, mentoring, awards and parties;
- 16) The *Star-Bulletin's* uniqueness or special attributes.

Interviewees

Twenty-five individuals were contacted for interviews, and two of them had never been *Star-Bulletin* employees. Twenty-three agreed to be interviewed. The interviews were conducted from November 2001 until February 2004. Generally, a snowballing technique was used to get names of interviewees. First, I listed people I knew who had been at the paper a long time and who had a significant influence at the paper, either because there were in management positions or because they were well-known, long-time staff members. I asked these individuals for names of others who would be helpful in this study. Nearly everyone I talked to asked me whether I had interviewed A. A. “Bud” Smyser, a columnist and long-time supporter and staff member of the newspaper. I had a brief interview with Smyser a month before he passed away and we arranged an interview date. Unfortunately he died two days before our interview. Individuals outside the paper who had a part in preventing the closure of the newspaper were also interviewed, as noted in the list below.

In-depth interviews were conducted, and participants could choose to remain anonymous and keep the information confidential, as recommended by the Institutional Review Board’s Committee on Human Subjects at the University of Hawai‘i. Stories or quotes for attribution were checked first with the participants; many gave permission at the time of the interview for the use of their quotes. Most interviews lasted from one to three hours. Some individuals were interviewed again later. Interviews were taped and

transcribed, and I noted my reflections immediately after the interviews. There were challenges; it was tedious and time-consuming transcribing the tapes and waiting for the transcripts to be reviewed by the participants and returned to me. In some cases, there were many additions and changes. Then, the texts were edited to improve readability when presented here. Interviewees and their affiliations as of July 2004 were:

A. A. "Bud" Symser (interviewed in brief before his death);

Helen Altonn (staff writer);

Frank Bridgewater (editor);

Richard Borreca (staff writer);

Burl Burlingame (staff copy editor);

Diane Chang (former editorial page editor);

Jean King (SOS* member and former lieutenant governor);

Crystal Kua (staff writer);

Ian Lind (former staff writer);

Lyle Nelson (former staff writer);

Cynthia Oi (editorial page writer);

Trini Peltier (former administration/editorial assistant);

Rob Perez (staff writer);

Steven Petranik (former news editor);

Richard Port (former chairman of the state Democratic Party and member of SOS*);

Michael Rovner (assistant managing editor);

David Shapiro (former managing editor);

John Simonds (former editor);

Corky Trinidad (cartoonist);

Lucy Young-Oda (assistant managing editor)

*SOS = Save Our *Star-Bulletin*

In addition, I had conversations with Blaine Fergstrom (former Webmaster), Leila Fujimori (staff writer) and Robbie Dingeman (former staff writer).

A statement or agreement was provided for participants to sign. Questions for each participant were provided in advance, and it was noted that the interview could lead beyond the questions. Interviews were audiotaped and transcribed, and detailed observational notes recorded as well as my reflections.

Time Frame

The study involved data collection during the period from the announcement of the closure of the *Star-Bulletin* in September 1999 through the handover in March 2001, and ending in July 2004. This time period was selected because it enabled me to analyze the events that led up to the announcement of the sale of the paper in October 2000, the

takeover March 15, 2001, and the response of the staff members to the changes as well as reflections on a previous era.

Story Analysis

Stories were coded into themes that were generated in two ways: from the content of the questions, and from information offered by the interviewees. Organizational culture researchers studying shared meanings rarely describe how they decide how much consensus is needed to categorize a meaning as being shared. Martin (1985) brings up this point, and she and her collaborators (Frost et. al 1985) decided that majority agreement — over 50 percent — would be used before there is considered to be consensus on what is shared, but this doesn't take into account small subcultures or the limitations on the numbers of individuals interviewed for the study — i.e. the sample size. In my study, it is the shared meanings and identity (or identities) at the *Star-Bulletin* that are of interest, although there may be cases where individual stories about a particular era or subculture are relevant to the study but are not shared because other individuals did not have the same experience because they weren't alive then or worked in a different section in the newsroom. Or there may be task-oriented subcultures or other groups. There were approximately 80 staff members in the *Star-Bulletin* newsroom, and I interviewed the equivalent of about one-quarter of them, including a few who had retired or moved on. Therefore I have chosen the lesser requirement of at least two individuals to determine shared meaning about an issue or event. For example, there may

have been only three people interviewed who could remember the statehood crusade, whereas there were many more participants who told stories about the '70s and '80s. Everyone interviewed tried to respond to all questions.

A study analyzing meaning and identity construction necessitates a discussion of how these terms are used in the story analysis. Organizational culture research focuses on meanings “anchored and transmitted in a symbolic form” (Alvesson 2002, p. 5). Symbols are “words, gestures, pictures, or objects that carry a particular meaning within a culture” (Hofstede et al., 1990: 291). A *symbol* “stands ambiguously for something beyond the object” (Alvesson 2002: 4). *Meaning* refers to how the object or words are interpreted in the stories. In most cases these stories have symbolic meaning as I interpret it; in a few, they simply reflect recollections of events.

The stories gathered from interviewees form the core of group consciousness, culture and self-image. Stories are presented as vignettes, and when relevant, with different facts or interpretations by different people. They are categorized by dominant themes, with ambiguities noted. For example, a common shared story is the one about the “Broken Trust” essay that helped to oust corrupt trustees from a wealthy estate set up for Hawaiians, a story that symbolically represented the competitive spirit of the *Star-Bulletin* vis-à-vis the *Advertiser* and the *Star-Bulletin's* fiesty, underdog culture. The story was also cited by participants as the reason that citizens rallied around the paper and supported its survival. These stories will be analyzed more fully in the chapters that follow.

The following chapters apply a structure that seeks to make sense of the many interconnected influences that have shaped the culture and identity of the paper and its newsroom staff and which are expressed in the narratives. These influences occur at several levels — macro/newspaper industry, local Hawai‘i level, the organizational level, and the personal, individual level — and connect the themes listed earlier. In the spirit of qualitative research and method, the analysis honors these intersections of levels of meaning. For example, the occupation of journalism and its values intersect with local culture and history of the importation of these values into Hawai‘i. The history of the ownership of the *Star-Bulletin* intersects with the economics of business and journalism.

The following chapters also examine the relevant historical forces, values, economics, key events, individuals, structures and routines that have helped shaped the organizational culture and identity of the *Star-Bulletin*. To summarize, these are considered within the historical lens construct that is used by Smircich (1983), whose definition of organizational culture links it with history. Martin’s (1992) notion that an organization is a nexus of cultural influences also underpins the analysis, as well as Whetten and Godfrey’s (1998) theory that connects identity and culture as reflected in self-referential discourse. Kent’s (1993) application of dependency theory is used here to analyze the influence of non-resident ownership and management on the newspaper and the importation of news values.

CHAPTER 3
ANALYSIS OF INTERVIEWS:
INFLUENCE OF VALUES, OWNERSHIP AND ECONOMICS ON *STAR-BULLETIN*
CULTURE

Imported and local forces have shaped the organizational culture and identity of *The Honolulu Star-Bulletin* throughout its history. Some of the most important influences have been the occupational values of journalism, and the impact of ownership and economics. The notion that the press could be independent of the government was imported with the establishment of newspapers by journalists who brought with them their mainland U.S. training and ideology (Kent 1993). They also brought with them American ownership structures, editorial leadership styles and ideology as well as routines for newspaper production and technology. The values of journalism and the roots of their development provide a necessary framework for understanding the motivation of *Star-Bulletin* reporters. They are discussed first, then connected to ownership, economics and history of the *Star-Bulletin*. This chapter provides some evidence of the progression of capitalist economic and ownership values at the *Star-Bulletin* at different times in its history. For example, in more recent times, conflict in profit-making ideologies versus journalism values has created a culture of contradictions at the *Star-Bulletin*. Later chapters show the influence of leadership, structures and routines on the newspaper. The resulting culture and identity is created by what Martin calls a nexus of influences that are shaped by historical forces, events and people. Shared

expressions of culture and identity emerge but some are being reinterpreted, such as local identity.

Professional and Occupational Culture and Values of Journalism: Newspapers as an Institution

The role of newspapers in America and its ideology give us a framework to understand the values that have driven the *Star-Bulletin's* editors and reporters throughout the paper's history. Newspapers chronicle the daily life of people, institutions and the powerful. They have played an important role in American society and in Hawai'i in their mission to inform, entertain and advocate. Just as important, they have served as a conduit for advertisers and citizens to sell products and services. As such, they have both a societal and commercial role. The newspaper industry is unique among commercial enterprises in America because it is protected by The First Amendment, which guarantees freedom of the press. That protection alone has given newspaper owners and their staff enormous power to write and print what they please, with no regulated requirements for accountability or responsibility. The First Amendment was not intended to bind the publisher "to certain responsibilities in exchange for his freedom," according to Peterson in the classic book *Four Theories of the Press* (1956). In the early days, American newspaper owners took the opportunity to promote their partisan political causes or support their economic interests; they depended on political parties and readers for their survival, and tended to be small circulation newspapers read only by the elites.

In the early days of the Republic, journalists subscribed to what they called a libertarian theory of the press, which meant that its members had the freedom to print what they wanted to, just or unjust, and a rational public would figure out the truth (Peterson, et al. 1956: 76-77). This truth notion had its roots in Liberalism developed in the 17th and 18th centuries. Man as citizen (and I mean men here, as women were not considered citizens then) was at the center. As a rational being, God had given man the power and reasoning to discern the truth when faced with a variety of viewpoints and information. The press was considered to be a partner in man's quest for the truth. The individual citizen, with help from the individual "journalist" acting in his quest for the "truth," would become an informed citizen, and thus contribute beneficially to public life in order to sustain a democracy.

Pursuit of truth became one of the enduring values of American journalists, a notion that was imported into Hawai'i, along with religion, capitalism and an American legal system. Throughout the *Star-Bulletin's* history, it was the dominant ideology that drove daily journalism and the production of the paper, as reflected in comments later from the editors and reporters who created the paper. The core of the ideology is that journalists were to be free from government interference, and truth could be used as a defense if they were criticized. The notion that "truth" could be determined from "objective" reporting came naturally to those "seeking legitimacy in an era of scientific discovery," to use Fuller's words in his book on news values (1994: 14). In what Peterson et al (1956) call a libertarian model, journalists in pursuit of the truth were supposed to be

“objective,” and that meant they were supposed to present a multiplicity of voices and ideas so that the citizen could then make choices. The question could always be asked: Whose objectivity? Whose voices are being heard? In the early days of colonialism in Hawai‘i, these rationalist values were represented through a colonial-missionary-capitalist frame of journalism that excluded the voices of the non-establishment Hawaiians. Objectivity was an imported notion that had no relevance to a colonized people. Objectivity assumes an independence from events and people interviewed that is impossible to achieve. Fuller says the concept of objectivity was:

. . . a hopelessly naïve notion from the beginning. And surely every reporter who has ever laid his fingers on the typewriter keys has known it. No one has ever achieved objective journalism, and no one ever could. The bias of the observer always enters the picture, if not coloring the details, at least guiding the choice of them (Fuller 1996: 14-15).

In Hawai‘i, the missionary-colonialists saw their voice as the correct one and presented it in their newspapers, both English and Hawaiian, as a way to convert and change Hawaiians into plantation workers. There was no notion of objectivity enshrined in a code of ethics at that time; it became codified in America in the 1920s. Before the turn of the century, newspapers were mainly promoted political and commercial interests, which in Hawai‘i were nearly one and the same. But there was opposition by Hawaiian, newspapers to colonization.

The culture of news today has its roots in turn-of-the-century journalism during a time when newspaper owners were shifting their focus from politics to profits. News was often sensationalist. After an era of yellow journalism muckraking, public sentiment in the 1950s shifted toward a social responsibility model (Peterson, et al 1956: 73). Its central notion is that freedom of the press carries certain obligations — among those being a check on the powerful and a watchdog for the rights of ordinary citizens.

The social responsibility model was a result of a landmark report critical of press performance published in 1947 by a group primarily made up of social scientists. The Hutchins Commission on Freedom of the Press, as it was called, was initiated by Henry R. Luce, editor-in-chief of *Time* magazine, and headed by Robert Hutchins, then president of the University of Chicago. No journalists were included in the commission, and they were furious that the report focused on journalists' performance rather than freedom of the press. The commission recommended that the press become more responsible or face legal restrictions, and this was the first time the notion of social responsibility of the press had been articulated. The social responsibility theory developed because libertarianism failed to provide rigorous standards for the media. One trend that led up to the Hutchins Commission was a trend that the newspaper industry also faces today — the growing concentration of power in the hands of a few corporations. As these press barons became removed from the people, minority opinions were less likely to be heard, and it was less likely that there would be a free marketplace of ideas (Schram 1957: 86). In addition, there were changes in thought going on in

American society – less faith in Adam Smith’s laissez-faire economics, and less faith that “truth” would emerge from a free marketplace of ideas. Interestingly, the Hutchins Commission came on the heels of press censorship in Hawai‘i during World War II — restrictions that were was opposed and fought by the editors of the *Star-Bulletin*.

The Hutchins Commission never made good on its threat to regulate the press, but the impact was felt. The culture of journalism as we know it today was formed. As Weaver and Wilhoit (1996: 138) note, most journalists in 1992 appeared “to have ‘a belief system’ that reflected the Commission’s goal of investigating ‘the truth about the fact(s)’ and providing ‘a context which gives them meaning’.” Journalism then progressed into what was considered a “golden age” in the 1960s and 1970s through coverage of the Vietnam War and Watergate. It was a time when the prosperous news business “had largely ceded day-to-day control of the news columns to the journalist” (Hallin 1992: 15). From a journalist’s perspective, it was an era of socially responsible journalism, free from pressures of state or business. It was a time of commitment to the ideals and values of journalism. The Society of Professional Journalists (Sigma Delta Chi) had gradually revised its code of ethics to link responsibility with freedom (Peterson 1956: 77). Today, this code of ethics is still considered to be the standard for all journalists. In summary, it says that:

Members of the Society of Professional Journalists believe that public enlightenment is the forerunner of justice and the foundation of democracy. The duty of the journalist is to further those ends by seeking truth and providing a fair

and comprehensive account of events and issues. Conscientious journalists from all media and specialties strive to serve the public with thoroughness and honesty.

- Seek Truth and Report It: Journalists should be honest, fair and courageous in gathering, reporting and interpreting information.
- Minimize Harm
- Act Independently
- Be Accountable

(Society of Professional Journalists Code of Ethics: 2003)

David Shapiro, former managing editor of the *Star-Bulletin* and later a columnist for the *Advertiser*, epitomizes the values espoused by the Society of Professional Journalists and demonstrates journalists' belief in their role in society:

During my time, I tried to make it (the *Star-Bulletin*) stand for openness, honesty, and ethics in public life. I thought it was our job to hold people accountable in public life, be independent, open-minded and not be afraid to chase stories or scandal. We need to be an agent for change in the community.

To me there is a First Amendment obligation to keep the readership informed about their public institutions. But more than that there are gut issues out there that are important. Our job is to identify those and report on them in a way that helps people make their decisions and live their lives; to participate in democracy.

A former long-time reporter explains the newspaper's mission:

I say to enlighten the community. Truth crushed to earth will rise again (William Cullen Bryant). That's why we're in business.

The truth-seeking mission of journalists is what they felt set them apart from others in society. Today, truth seeking underpins the values of fairness, impartiality and balance. But it wasn't always that way, as we'll see in the next section on the history of ownership and economics at the *Star-Bulletin*. Evidence and stories from participants helps us understand that at times one truth, such as that of the commercial establishment, dominated other "truths." At other times in the paper's history, reporters had more freedom seek other truths and expose corruption of the established powers.

Influence of Ownership and Economics on the *Star-Bulletin*: 1882-1993

In some ways the *Star-Bulletin* has reflected national trends in ownership and management; in others it has been noticeably different, influenced by local forces, politics and cultural attitudes about control by non-resident owners. Nationally, newspaper ownership has changed dramatically over time. The following sections cover the history of the forerunners of the *Star-Bulletin* and the most important trends that affected the paper after it was established in 1912. These were:

- Business-driven journalism. This began to overtake the editorial leadership of newspapers at the end of the 18th Century and increased in intensity at the end of the 20th Century. With the growing corporate concentration of power in the 1990s, newspapers in

the new millennium had become just one product among many owned by large corporations.

- Growth of mass circulation newspapers after WWII;
- Growth of multiple media outlets, such as radio, television and the Internet;
- Growth of global capital, and in particular, American capital;
- Changing readership habits that hurt sales of afternoon dailies, beginning most dramatically in the 1970s. This resulted in the thinning out of newspapers in the 1970s and 1980s because of a drop in mass-market advertising dollars;
- Global stagflation and the energy crisis in the 1970s.

Major trends and events in Hawai'i that affected the *Star-Bulletin* were:

- Importation of newspapers to Hawai'i by missionaries;
- World War II and the bombing of Pearl Harbor;
- Rise of the oligarchy and its demise later in the 1950s with the growing power of descendants of the plantation era;
- Statehood;
- Rise of non-resident ownership.

Early history of the Star-Bulletin: Founding to Farrington Family

Missionaries brought newspapers to Hawai'i. In Hawai'i, missionaries brought printing presses and American values, laws and institutions to support their beliefs –

something religious groups were quite familiar with on the mainland. According to Chapin's (1996) account of Hawai'i's press, the Calvinists "inaugurated an establishment press — establishment in that even though the papers spoke for just a handful of people and not for the vast majority of the native population, in just a few years they had come to exert a dominant influence on the Islands" (p. 16). She continues: "Paradoxically, the New Englanders imported other American values, including the ideals of freedom of conscience and speech" (Chapin 1996: 18). In the meantime, far away on the mainland, a significant change in technology enabled the creation of the mass circulation newspaper, a development that was to help with the establishment of mass circulation newspapers in Hawai'i and with the dissemination of American values. Among the new penny-press lords was James Gordon Bennett Sr., who influenced the future of newspapers with the creation of his mass circulation paper, *The New York Morning Herald*, in 1835. The improvement of papermaking machinery and the invention of the rotary press as well as the spread of literacy enabled Bennett to establish an independent paper that served the middle and working class as well as his own business ambitions (Bogart 1993: 3). Like other penny papers, it concentrated on crime reports and human-interest stories and scandals (Campbell 2002). His and other penny papers became dependent on advertisers and classified ads rather than political parties — a change that eventually would have a profound effect on journalism.

In Hawai'i, an expanding politically powerful commercial class wanted newspapers that promoted American government and capitalist values rather than those

of the missionaries (Chapin 1996: 19).⁶ American dominance of the islands was “preached and practiced,” although it was challenged unsuccessfully by the *Honolulu Times* (Chapin 1996: 41, 48). In the second half of the 1800s there were more diverse voices in print than there are today. Domination of the islands by outside commercial interests succeeded in silencing these voices, particularly after annexation in 1897 when Hawaiian newspapers died.

Hawaiian newspapers flourished in the 1860s and 1880s to 1890s as resistance newspapers opposing the plantation-colonial-missionary dominance of the islands and its annexation. These papers presented the previously silenced voice of Hawaiians, whose population was being decimated by disease as their culture and language was killed. Silva (1999), in her words, “analyzes the resistance discourse in the first Hawaiian language newspaper free of missionary control, *Ka Hoku o ka Pakipika* (the Star of the Pacific), which emerged in 1861 during a period of repression of hula, traditional medicine, and the indigenous religion.”⁷ It was sponsored by Chief David Kalākaua. She compares it to other Hawaiian language papers, “which were all assisting in colonizing the Kanaka Maoli (Hawaiians).” She writes: “Through that paper, the Kanaka Maoli claimed the power of the press for themselves, affirming their identity as a people/nation, and resisting attempts to convert them into plantation laborers.”⁸ Chapin (1996) notes that

⁶ The history of the *Star-Bulletin* has been documented by Alf Pratte in his master’s thesis (1967) and dissertation (1976) and by Helen Geracimos Chapin (1996). Chapin documents the influence of all newspapers in shaping Hawai’i, and Pratte documents the history of the *Star-Bulletin* up until 1966 and the influence of the newspaper and the Farrington family on statehood.

⁷ Silva (1999), page 3.

⁸ Silva (1999) abstract.

there were at least two dozen opposition papers between 1881 and 1896 that represented roughly 85 percent of the population, and that their leaders were both Hawaiian and Caucasian. But the power elite that controlled the oligarchy papers had more money, more advertising and newer presses. They “poured money into their papers.” (Chapin: 93-94).

Even English-language newspapers that bucked the power elite were silenced, such as Whitney’s *Advertiser*. *The Pacific Commercial Advertiser* appeared in 1852, founded by Henry M. Whitney, a descendent of the first missionaries. It became *The Honolulu Advertiser* in 1921. It was owned by descendants of protestant missionaries until 1992, except from 1870 to 1888. Interestingly, Whitney also began the *Daily Bulletin* in 1882 — one of the forerunners of *The Honolulu Star-Bulletin* (Chapin 1996: 53, Pratte 1967: 22). Whitney had to sell the *Advertiser* in 1870 after he denounced the importation of “oriental” labor, and his financial support dried up. He continued to publish *Kuokoa*, which was originally the fourth page of the *Advertiser* published in Hawaiian, employing Hawaiian editors such as Joseph Kawainui, S.K. Mahoe and J.M. Poepoe. It achieved a circulation beyond the *Advertiser*’s earlier figures (Chapin 1996: 56-57). But he denigrated hula and put down the Hawaiians.

In the 1880s Chinese newspapers sprang up to support Chinese immigrant issues, and in particular in 1900 after the great Chinatown fire. Later, there were Filipino and Japanese newspapers, in particular, *Hawai‘i Hochi*, which supported better conditions and wages for plantation workers after the turn of the century (Chapin (1996).

Hawai'i Hochi continues to operate today, as well as many other non-English-language newspapers. In the 1880s and 1890s the English-language press in America and in Hawai'i had been increasingly dominated by commercial interests.

The *Star-Bulletin*, founded in 1912, was owned and run by white businessmen and newspapermen originally from the mainland until the 1960s when Chinn Ho and his *hui* (group) bought the paper. He was the first non-white to own a major English-language daily newspaper in Hawai'i.

Neither the *Star-Bulletin* nor the *Advertiser* was the first daily; that distinction belonged to the short-lived *Daily Hawaiian Herald*, but the *Daily Bulletin* is the oldest continuous daily (later as the *Star-Bulletin* (Pratte 1967: 27). The *Daily Bulletin* vowed in editorials to represent the public interest and to support “neither sect nor party” (Pratte: 32). In 1881 it pledged to: “be a medium for the publication of the earliest and most reliable information upon matters of public interest, with particular reference to the commerce, agriculture and general business of the country.” This policy represented the establishment sentiment of that time and did not claim to represent the voices of Hawaiians. The public interest meant the commercial interests. Yet the policy also claimed to be “aloof from political discussions, avoiding anything that smacks of partianship (sic)” (Pratte 1967: 31). Supporting business interests and the establishment was not considered partisanship, which was understood in political terms to mean government or party affiliation. The *Bulletin* frequently attacked the *Advertiser*, criticizing it for partisanship; in 1886 a *Bulletin* editor called the *Advertiser* a “party hack

sheet.” This early adversarial sentiment is still evident in competition between the two dailies today.

The *Daily Bulletin* went through a series of editors, including Lorrin A. Thurston, who stayed about a year. Thurston was a key player in the overthrow of the monarchy in 1893 and in Hawai‘i’s annexation to the U.S. in 1898. He controlled the *Advertiser* from 1900 until his death in 1931 (Chapin: 193). The *Bulletin*, on the other hand, supported Hawaiian royalty. The *Hawaiian Star*, another forerunner of the *Star-Bulletin*, was founded in 1893 as the “official voice of the Provisional Government by American businessman J. Atherton; its name symbolized the star of annexation” (Chapin: 98). It became a “spokesman for the most rampant annexationists,” and was colorful and rambunctious (Pratte: 37). Some of the spirit and boldness of today’s *Star-Bulletin* can be traced back to the *Hawaiian Star*, which introduced more aggressive, bold “California methods of journalism into Hawai‘i” (Pratte 1967:39). In 1895 the *Daily Bulletin* became the *Evening Bulletin*. At that time, the paper said it would support the provisional government and not the monarchy, oppose the immigration of workers from Asia, and seek an independent republic (Pratte: 42). By that time, the population had grown because of immigration.

In the early 20th Century, the press in Hawai‘i reflected national circumstances; newspapers were increasingly controlled by business interests. Pratte calls this a change from “personal editorial leadership to business office leadership” (Pratte 1976: 35) as newspapers became more complex and needed greater capital investment. Ironically,

newspaper editors at the time, including those at the *Bulletin*, believed in objectivity, in “just the facts ma’am,” even though just the facts meant those that interested the established commercial and *haole*⁹ political interests. Editorial policy statements help us understand how these newspapers constructed an identity that supported the elite establishment and publicized it through publication of these statements.¹⁰ In effect, journalism, economic interests and the power structure were closely connected (Chapin: 77). The early leaders of the *Bulletin* had a significant influence in setting the foundation for the *Star-Bulletin* as a powerful journalism institution in Hawai‘i that would play a key role in statehood. The *Star-Bulletin* also had an important role in assisting in the colonizing of Hawai‘i by oligarchy interests.

Farrington Era

The *Star* and the *Bulletin* merged in 1912 for business reasons and had financial support from Charles H. Atherton and his family. The next period of the *Star-Bulletin* was influenced heavily by the Farrington family and Texas-born Riley Allen, who was editor after the merger. According to Schein’s (1992) theory of leadership, founders create the new organization, and then bring in other individuals to form a group. Founders of organizations have a major impact on how the group defines itself, solves problems and adapts to its environment. The founders have their own ideas, based on

⁹ Refers to a foreigner, and has come to mean Caucasians.

¹⁰ Pratte (1967) documents editorial statements from the 19th and early 20th centuries.

their own notions and culture, and impose that on others or hire others like them. This was true of the founder of the *Star-Bulletin*, Wallace Rider Farrington, and the editor he hired, Allen. Farrington became editor of the *Evening Bulletin* in 1898, then business manager and later owner and publisher of the paper. He was from Maine and had formerly been editor of the *Pacific Commercial Advertiser* for about a year and a half (Pratte: 44). It is interesting to note that throughout the history of both papers editors and staff have migrated back and forth between the *Advertiser* and the *Star-Bulletin*, and there has been intense rivalry.

Old-timers from the *Star-Bulletin* still remember the Farrington family and especially working with Riley Allen (staff usually called him by both names). Their narratives help link the past with the present in understanding the influence of these leaders on the *Star-Bulletin*, its organizational culture and identity.

Wallace Farrington and Allen established an aggressive policy in reporting that continued later under editor A. A. “Bud” Smyser, and other editors such as Shapiro. Farrington also kept up with technological change, being the first in the islands to bring in the Associated Press dispatches and the latest in linotype machinery and presses (Pratte 1967: 46-47). This further helped to connect Hawai‘i with the mainland, and even more closely in 1951 when satellite was brought in (Chapin: 98). The *Star-Bulletin* was also the first daily newspaper in the islands to have a web site, established March 18, 1996 by Blaine Fergerstrom, a creative, free-spirited Webmaster. This new site established a link between Hawai‘i transplants on the mainland and their home. In Farrington’s time, the

Star-Bulletin was bold, using large pictures, much as it does today with nearly half-page photos.

Chapin notes that the Farrington years illustrate the “intimate relationship within the establishment of business, newspapers and government” (Chapin: 146). Farrington, in addition to serving as general manager of the *Star-Bulletin*, was also a member of the Board of Regents of the University of Hawai‘i and president of the Honolulu Ad Club (Pratte 1967: 61). Farrington was a staunch Republican. Yet editor Riley Allen wrote that “independence and integrity in the news were ingrained in Farrington’s make-up” (Pratte: 52). The notion of independence, as in earlier years, was constructed on an ideal of “objectivity,” which today is a much-contested concept. In 1912 Allen published a policy that would guide the *Star-Bulletin* and help form its culture:

The ideals of the newspaper are aggressive, accurate, thorough newsgathering and news publishing, service to the readers of the broadest possible scope and fidelity to the welfare of the territory. It aims to give the news, to give it first, to give it accurately and impartially and to use its best and sincere endeavors to promote the progress of Progressive Hawai‘i. (*The Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, July 1, 1912.

Quoted in Pratte 1976: 89.)

At that time, the distinction between editorial policy — the opinion of the editor and the owners — and news content was not as clear as it is today in many newspapers. Under Allen, the paper strived to report the news accurately and “impartially,” yet at the

same time promote a “Progressive Hawai‘i,” which was the unquestioned establishment viewpoint. The *Star-Bulletin* was like other newspapers in America in the first part of the 20th Century. The agenda of the owners and editors was evident in editorials as well as in the selection of news content. However, in the second half of the 20th Century the distinction was greater. Today, with the influence of market-driven journalism, big media ownership and shareholders’ interests, there is more influence from owners on the news content in order to directly protect their commercial interests rather than just political ones.

At certain time in its history, the *Star-Bulletin* took some editorial risks in the name of fairness, publishing dispatches credited to German sources during World War I so readers could learn about German policy. In the 1920s the paper supported American-style education and advocated against Japanese language schools. The Supreme Court ruled in 1927 that barring Japanese from attending Japanese language schools was unconstitutional (Pratte 1967:79). But at the time, other newspapers warned against teaching local children “above their station,” said *Star-Bulletin* Capitol reporter Richard Borreca in his history of the *Star-Bulletin*.¹¹ The *Star-Bulletin*, seemingly racist by today’s standards, was still bucking *haole* elite sentiment because Farrington and Allen had their eyes on statehood. To achieve statehood, everyone in Hawai‘i had to behave as “American” as they could; no one should be seen as an “alien.” Borreca notes that

¹¹ Richard Borreca, “*Star-Bulletin* has always been a newspaper for Hawaii’s people,” starbulletin.com/2001/04/01/special/story2.html

Farrington had adopted two Hawaiian children, and had started to hire Asian reporters in the mid-1930s, when racism was entrenched in Hawai‘i and on the mainland. The *Star-Bulletin* was ahead of the rest of the country in support of non-whites. Until the civil rights movement, mainland journalists tended to have a narrow view of news, and minorities were often excluded. “News about women, blacks and others outside the narrow vision of the establishment press continued to be neglected” (Schudson 2003: 87).

During the World War II years and up through statehood in 1959 the *Star-Bulletin* moved into its prime, as its editors took advantage of events and the politics of the time to earn its place in history. Circulation was strong and growing. One former reporter remembers:

In the war years, our circulation was 130,000 to 140,000 (probably more). Our final was called the pink edition, because it was printed on pink paper. We had the Wall Street stocks, baseball line scores; day games and final results.

Stories about that time are well known by staff members, particularly because of the intense rivalry with the *Advertiser*. The *Star-Bulletin* beat the *Advertiser* on the biggest story so far in that century — the bombing of Pearl Harbor. Allen was in the office early as usual on a Sunday working on Monday’s paper when the attack began. He called in staff and got out three “Extra” eight-page extra editions, the first within two hours, making the *Star-Bulletin* the first newspaper in the world with details of the attack (Chapin: 172, Pratte 1967, Borreca 2001). Allen got first word of the attack from Joseph

Gomes, a *Star-Bulletin* circulation manager who was at Pearl Harbor at the time. The *Advertiser* press had broken down and several staff members had been up all night or out drinking (Chaplin 1998: 201-202). It was the biggest story of their lives, but the *Star-Bulletin* got it. The WAR! Edition front page became famous worldwide. Chaplin reports that the *Star-Bulletin* “briefly put aside its rivalry and permitted the *Advertiser* to print its December 8 issue in its building” (Chaplin 1998: 203). But the *Advertiser* made another mistake. It used an incorrect report from an Army source and put a headline on its front page that said “Saboteurs Land Here!”¹²

Martial law was soon enacted, and censorship quickly imposed on all news outlets. *Star-Bulletin* staff members are quick to point out that they felt they were superior to *Advertiser* staff because of their stance during World War II and during statehood. The *Star-Bulletin* differed from the *Advertiser* in its fight against military censorship. Allen fought the restraints although he initially cooperated. *Advertiser* publisher Lorrin Thurston became a public relations advisor to the military governor (Pratte 1976:168) and opposed the restoration of civil rights. The federal official assigned to censor the paper called Allen “the most courageous and independent newspaper editor within the framework of military society” (Borreca 2001). Martial law lasted for three years.

¹² A new version of The *Advertiser* War Edition — one the *Advertiser* could have published if its press hadn’t broken down — was published for the 50th anniversary of the Dec. 9, 1941 attack. “They were playing fast and loose with history,” one *Star-Bulletin* staff member commented.

The *Star-Bulletin* distinguished itself from its competition by refusing to use the word “Japs” during World War II in stories and headlines, a policy that endears the paper to Japanese American readers even today. This policy helped forge its identity in the community and was expressed in self-referential discourse by staff members. “We had a good reputation that was helped by the American Japanese attitudes toward the *Star-Bulletin*,” said one former staff member. Borreca (2001) writes that “when World War II headlines shrieked the racial invective ‘Jap,’ the *Star-Bulletin* forbade its use.” The *Advertiser* did use “Japs” in headlines. Pratte (1976) cites Farrington’s files in which he said, “We were not going to fight a race war in the *Star-Bulletin*.” Farrington noted that one-third of the population was Japanese.

Allen and the *Star-Bulletin*’s open support for a racial group first appeared during World War II when stories about the valor of the Japanese American 442nd Regimental Combat Team were published. The policy of not using Japs in headlines as well as *Star-Bulletin* support for statehood helped to form the identity of the paper as “pro-local,” which, for those journalists, meant for the people, support for equality, for the Asian population in particular, and against the old *kama’aina* oligarchy (longtime residents who weren’t born here) that then dominated the islands. Staff members interviewed expressed similar sentiments. For Allen and the Farringtons, statehood was a way for “locals” to be considered equal with mainland *haoles*. Equality was defined in white men’s terms, and became an accepted frame for *Star-Bulletin* reporters. Equality meant pro-establishment,

and the establishment at that time was increasingly composed of Asian Americans. Most Hawaiians were left out.

In his master's thesis and dissertation, Pratte (1967 and 1976) makes a case for the influence of Wallace Farrington, and his son, Joseph, and his wife, Elizabeth, in supporting statehood from the earliest years of discussion at the end of the 19th Century. Pratte wrote: "This dissertation will show that the *Star-Bulletin* was ahead of the Hawaiian culture in leading the statehood movement for nearly 60 years" (Pratte 1976: 8). Pratte reflects the dominant view among the establishment press of the time.

"Hawaiian culture" referred to the complex culture of Hawai'i, not the culture of Native Hawaiians. He also comments that the Farrington family and Riley Allen, through the *Star-Bulletin*, may have done more over a long period of time to bring about statehood than any other social or political force (Pratte 1967: 81). After Wallace was appointed territorial governor, his son Joe took over the paper in 1924 (Wallace died in 1933) and crusaded for statehood until his death in 1954, when his wife, Elizabeth, took over. Pratte noted that in 1934, 10 years after Joseph had taken over, "there was no notable shift in policy from the guidelines first laid out by Wallace Rider Farrington two decades before" (1967:102).

Allen served as editor from 1912 until 1960, except for the years 1918 to 1921 (Pratte 1976: 274). During Allen's period, the *Star-Bulletin* supported integrated education, equal rights for Hawai'i's citizens and a repeal of racial restrictions in American immigration laws. However, racist sentiments were expressed in both papers

during the famous Massie case in 1931. And, in the 1950s, both papers engaged in red baiting and fear of Communists in organized labor, much of which was non-white. In 1951-1952 the *Star-Bulletin* expressed fear that Communists would take over Hawai‘i as a result of activity by the International Longshoremen’s and Warehousemen’s Union (ILWU) (Chapin 1996: 204). But at the *Star-Bulletin* there were concerns that red baiting would delay statehood. In 1952, the *Star-Bulletin* had already begun to back away from insisting that the territory was in the grips of a Communist conspiracy (Chapin: 210). And later, Borreca (2001) notes: “When a powerful U.S. senator called Hawai‘i a ‘communist community,’ the *Star-Bulletin* responded with one of American journalism’s most memorable front pages — no news, just eight columns naming the military men from the islands who were killed or wounded in Korea, fighting communism.”

The Farringtons and Allen believed all could be best served by statehood (Chapin 1996; Pratte 1976), including Asian Americans and especially Japanese Americans, if they got equal rights under statehood. The dominant thinking among the establishment of the time was “equal opportunity” and the notion that development and increased linkages with the mainland were good for Hawai‘i (Kent 1993). “The goal was democracy for all in Hawai‘i, to give our Asian population a political voice equal to their numbers,” A.A. “Bud” Smyser, the political editor during the statehood drive, said in a story in 2001. ILWU union supporter and social worker Ah Quon McElrath was also quoted about statehood: “We wanted to extend democracy to an isolated group of islands with a multi-

ethnic group. We wanted to be absolutely sure we got that kind of ‘democracy’.”¹³ As one staff member recalls in detail:

The foundation of local people’s loyalty to the *Star-Bulletin* has something to do with statehood. Because before statehood, for a long time Hawai‘i was really run by the U.S. Navy. And, for a long, long time Hawai‘i was run by Republicans and mainlanders. At least that’s the impression.

Hawai‘i was very *haole*. It had something to do with racism. This was wartime, and then the 1950s, when racism was still the norm all over the United States and in Hawai‘i too, which was a military base. That’s the only thing the Mainland thinks of Hawai‘i is our military, so we were run by the Navy and the Big Five (powerful group of companies).

After the war, the Republicans were big in power, and whether it was right or wrong, the local population got the impression that was the *haole* party. At that time, if you flew on Hawaiian Air and a *haole* came on board, even if you are seated in your seat already they bumped you off. (Novelist) James Michener couldn’t even buy a house on Kahala Avenue because he was married to a Japanese girl.

¹³Richard Borreca, “Statehood brought ‘democracy for all’,” starbulletin.com/2001/04/01/special/story5.htm

The movement for statehood was a really big, simmering thing in Hawai‘i, and the *Star-Bulletin* was writing on it. The *Star-Bulletin* has more local staff. Riley Allen was one of the leaders of the statehood movement. So it all came in the psyche of the people of Hawai‘i that the *Star-Bulletin* was the people’s newspaper — therefore the local people, therefore equality.

The 1960 election for Kennedy was the first time Hawai‘i started voting as a state. All the local people voted for Kennedy because Kennedy was a Democrat. Locally, Democrats like (John) Burns, (Daniel) Inouye, and (Patsy) Mink were the catalyst. So, even the Democrats here locally became synonymous with local people, with an anti-*haole*, anti-Republican Party, which they’re still enjoying now even if it doesn’t exist anymore. So I think basically, the love for the Democratic Party by the local people has its foundation in that.

A famous copy of the statehood edition of the *Star-Bulletin* shows a picture of a newspaper carrier, Chester Kahapea, with a wide smile hawking the paper the day Hawai‘i became the 50th state on Aug. 21, 1959. Smyser, city editor when the statehood bill was passed and later editor of the *Star-Bulletin*, wrote a news story that was biased toward statehood, saying that Hawai‘i had finally gotten the “statehood it has long deserved.”¹⁴ He told Alf Pratte in an interview:

¹⁴ A.A. “Bud” Smyser, *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, as cited in Pratte 1967:2.

It was a day when everybody agreed with *Star-Bulletin* treasurer A.K. Wong who said, ‘We’re all *haoles* now!’ It meant that regardless of race or anything else, the residents of Hawaii were all equal now in the eyes of the U.S....This was what Statehood was all about — a sense of equality...” (Pratte: 1976:2).

Wong’s comment is particularly informative. Being *haole* could be interpreted to mean that Wong and other Asian Americans had been “colonized,” as Trask (2000) would say, and had entered the establishment and the power structure. Farrington recognized the rising status of the *Nisei*; statehood and “equal rights for all” would boost circulation. But, as Smyser commented in an interview shortly before his death, Allen and the Farringtons sincerely believed that statehood was best for all in Hawai‘i:

The Farringtons and Allens were a wonderful team. They believed deeply in equality and equal rights and they meant all races. Not just some and not others. They had a deep belief in education as a tool for achieving equality.¹⁵

Even when Joe Farrington proposed to his wife-to-be, Betty, he told her he was dedicated to statehood, Smyser said. Eventually the *Advertiser* also came to support statehood. Publisher Lorrin Potter Thurston reversed himself even though the *Advertiser’s* major stockholder, industrial giant Walter Dillingham, opposed statehood.

¹⁵ Interview with A.A. “Bud” Smyser, Feb. 1, 2001.

Pratte (1975) documents the influence of *Star-Bulletin* owners Wallace, Elizabeth and Joseph Farrington and editor Riley Allen on the Hawai'i's statehood movement. Joseph promoted statehood through his important friends and newspaper contacts in Washington during a three-year stay. These contacts included the staff of *U.S. News and World Report* newsmagazine, the Associated Press, and United Press (Pratte: 134). Pratte concludes that the *Star-Bulletin* and its owners were successful in achieving and maintaining leadership in the statehood movement because, for one reason, American institutions were already established in the islands when Wallace Farrington arrived in 1894.

Pratte's extensive documentation of the paper's support for statehood, however, does not use the experience of self-identified locals or Hawaiians as context for analysis. Many interviews are with *haoles*. The questions could be asked: What are equal rights? Why did the Farringtons support statehood? For whose interests? How would integrated and universal education, an American institution with American values, affect Hawaiian children? Statehood was not supported by all Hawai'i's people, particularly Hawaiians, because they saw it as further theft of their land. Whitehead documents opposition, particularly by Alice Kamokila Campbell, Campbell Estate Heiress and descendant of royalty.¹⁶ Chapin notes that *Advertiser* editor Lorrin Andrews Thurston opposed statehood because of fears that the oligarchy would lose its power to mainlanders. She

¹⁶ The information from Whitehead is taken from Chapin (1996: 235) who cites historian John S. Whitehead (1993). "The Anti-Statehood Movement and the Legacy of Alice Kamokila Campbell," *The Hawaiian Journal of History*, 27 (1993): 43-64.

quotes an anonymous source who said that Thurston feared that mainland *haoles* with big money would “swoop in” and buy out Hawai’i. Silva (1999) documents earlier resistance to annexation in Hawaiian-language newspapers, which were ignored because the *haoles* could not read them.

In this study, the staff members who worked at the newspaper at the time of statehood were asked what it meant for them and for Hawai’i. Questions explored the multicultural context at that time, and the *Star-Bulletin*’s place in Hawai’i. One *Star-Bulletin* reporter commented:

There was this big, “we’re second-class citizens” thing. It was a divided feeling, but probably the overriding feeling was to achieve statehood. I think that people (on the mainland) still thought we had grass huts and stuff. They did!

The reporter also commented that statehood changed Hawai’i:

We had to ask everybody we interviewed coming in from the mainland their opinion of statehood. Many residents wanted statehood. It changed everything though. It changed a lot. We went from being a wonderful, lazy paradise to a metropolitan, modern city with all its ills.

Another staff member reflected statehood:

Statehood was the biggest story in the ’50s. That was Riley’s. Riley fought for statehood. I remember the day it became official. One of the secretaries went up to the door, and Riley was crying, so she closed the door, and nobody bothered

him. I remember the church bells ringing; the ships in the harbor. People were out in the streets. I said, Wow. What was statehood? I couldn't understand statehood. I was so young. Statehood? So? I didn't know. After a while I began to understand.

We get to vote for the president. What's the difference? We were some little speck in the ocean.

Local people were uncertain about how statehood would affect them. The Hawaiians fought statehood, which was seen as serving *haole* and Asian American interests. A former *Star-Bulletin* staff member's reflections on statehood seem to contradict the policy that the paper's reporters should write for the Kalihi housewife:

The Big Five people would benefit from statehood, but the Kalihi housewife couldn't care less.

The statement implies that even if she didn't support statehood, she should, and the newspaper would tell her why. Support for statehood was sold as a benefit for all, but it was yet another way to import American institutions and values from the outside that strengthen ties with the economic and political center. Initially, statehood was opposed by the *Advertiser* because of fears by *kama'aina* businessmen and the Big Five companies that dominated the islands that mainlanders would take over Hawai'i. This fear had been a common theme among the *kama'aina* businessmen who controlled the oligarchy. Kent

describes efforts in 1954 by Walter Dillingham, who attempted to stop Henry J. Kaiser from bringing in big money for development (1993: 104-105). Reporter Lyle Nelson attended Kaiser's first press conference before that, and recalls the cold reception Kaiser got from local businessmen and politicians:

That was in 1950 or '51 and the press conference was held at the HVB (Hawai'i Visitor's Bureau) office. Henry J. Kaiser never mentioned O'ahu. His whole pitch was he was going to change Kona (on the Big Island of Hawai'i). He was going to move the Kona airport and he was going to build a new airport, which they did later, make a town of 25,000 people, make a marina for yachts, six golf courses. His whole community would service all these hotels and places for rich folks. They had to get the runways away from where they were, which was close to the old King Kamehameha Hotel.

Lorrin Thurston at the *Advertiser* owned the property over there. That was the hangup. The Democrats had taken over, and Kaiser went to them, and wanted one for one. I'll put up X million dollars and you put up X million and we'll do this, so he got nothing. A lot of people didn't like him. He was an outside whiz bang. He made those victory ships during the war. Kaiser Aluminum. So the upshot is, he doesn't go to Kona at all. And when the Democrats turned him down, he ends up in the village and in Hawai'i Kai. Hawai'i Kai was pig farms, a little dirt road and a pond. There were Hawaiians living out there. Kaiser created Hawai'i Kai.

And, the Hilton Hawaiian Village (hotel) replaced what they called “submarine alley.”

This was sailors and fistfights and junk housing. Well, Kaiser came along and bulldozed the whole thing. Because he was in the aluminum business, he built an aluminum dome. He used 19 men and did it in 19 hours. That was the whole idea. Then he went to the Legislature and said, “Look, I can build these for you all over the state.” The state was full of high schools that were crying for gymnasiums for their basketball teams. The poor kids were practicing out in the rain. And they told him to go to hell, and it never happened. On that corner of the street there was this aluminum dome for years and years and years.¹⁷

Thurston, himself a product of colonizer/settlers, seemed to understand too well the economic impact of mainland *haoles* on the economic conditions for newspapers, or any business for that matter, in the islands. The matter of keeping mainlanders out arose again in 1962 when the *Advertiser* and the *Star-Bulletin* set up a Joint Operating Agreement (JOA) to save the *Advertiser*, keep it out of mainland hands, and take control of the *Star-Bulletin* away from the Farrington trust after Joe Farrington died. Under a JOA, editorial operations are separate but all business, printing and distribution operations are combined to save money. According to George Chaplin, former editor of

¹⁷ Interview with Lyle Nelson, Feb. 2, 2004.

the *Advertiser* and a stockholder, Thurston Twigg-Smith, nephew of Lorrin Thurston, maneuvered to take over the *Advertiser* and set up the JOA when the *Advertiser* only had a few days of cash left (Chaplin 1998). He had the help of a local businessman, Chinn Ho, who was named president of the *Star-Bulletin*, the J.M. Atherton trust and other investors. There was also a struggle going on between Betty Farrington and the Farrington trustees at the *Star-Bulletin* over the sale of the paper, and there had been discussions with the Hearst newspaper company. According to one former staffer, the fight was intense:

In 1960 both papers went into court for ugly fights over ownership. It was incredible. Lorrin (Thurston) lost his battle to Twigg-Smith. The court got Betty Farrington to admit she wanted Hearst. The court fights caught both newsrooms by surprise. It was a battle to the finish for each.

In the end, the *Star-Bulletin* remained in the hands of local investors, and for the first time a non-Caucasian was an owner. Also the *Advertiser* stayed in the hands of a descendent of a missionary family. Ownership from the outside was kept out for the time being. This was an extremely important time in the life of both the papers because it set up the management structure that was to have a great impact on the *Star-Bulletin's* financial health, and consequently on its news and editorial operations through the end of the century. The new Joint Operating Agreement established a new era that benefited both papers' owners financially at various times, but which was one of the factors that

helped to push the *Star-Bulletin* out of its dominant position in the marketplace of daily news in Hawai‘i.

During the 1950s and 1960s, Hawai‘i experienced a post-war boom. Tourism, land development and military expansion were on the rise. Competition between the two papers for growing advertising dollars was intense, and the *Star-Bulletin* continued to gain in circulation when it started a Sunday edition in 1959 in direct competition with the *Advertiser’s* Sunday paper. At the same time, editorial leadership was decentralized so that Riley Allen began to delegate more news gathering and dissemination duties to William Ewing, who would later succeed him as editor, and advertising and circulation to Porter Dickenson (Pratte 1967: 159-160). Allen retired in 1960. He served as one of three trustees for the Farrington family trust and wanted to act freely and avoid a conflict of interest when he approved the sale of the *Star-Bulletin* to the Chinn Ho *hui*, according to Pratte (1967: 165-166). Future editor Smyser wrote in a *Star-Bulletin* column that “It dismayed him that the best course to assure income to the Farrington heirs was to sell the paper.”¹⁸ Allen told Pratte that “the decision to sell the paper was prompted by the motivation to keep the paper ‘in island hands’ and the fact that the Chinn Ho offer was in the best interest of the paper” (Pratte: 176). The ownership transfer was formalized in April 1962.

After Allen’s long uninterrupted tenure, the *Star-Bulletin* changed editorship and

¹⁸ A.A. “Bud” Smyser, “Black joins roll of distinguished owners,” starbulletin.com/2001/04/01/special/story10.html

ownership many times. The changes in ownership altered the *Star-Bulletin's* business relationship with the *Advertiser* four times, including the first major change in 1961. News/editorial competition had always been intense between the two papers, but competitive pressures in the early part of the new millennium reduced the freedom reporters felt they had in the past, most likely a result of the increasing competition and commodification of news. The *Star-Bulletin* went from being a fat, dominant newspaper in the 1950s and early 1960s to the underdog paper by 1990, struggling in 2004, when intense competitive pressure squeezed profits at both dailies. Profits for the *Star-Bulletin* have not been disclosed. The pressure on resources meant that *Star-Bulletin* staff members had to work even harder, and they didn't have Gannett's deep pockets to draw upon.

Star-Bulletin staff members, in response to change, began to construct characteristics of their organization that were to remain, in their minds, central to their identity and culture. These were expressed in stories that nostalgically created a better time, particularly among those who could remember back to the 1950s. Interviewees had no direct experience with the *Star-Bulletin* during World War II, so those times in the history of the paper were also interpreted by staff in a positive way. Some of these notions expressed by staff were that the *Star-Bulletin* supported local people and equality; it was the bigger, superior paper. From Martin's perspective, an integrationist consensus perspective is evident among the interviewees; there is more consensus and shared meaning about distant events and their symbolism than more recent events. This is

particularly evident in the stories about statehood and support for *Nisei* and their loyalty to the paper during and after World War II.

Post statehood: Chinn Ho and the Gannett Company

Some of the important changes in ownership that affected the *Star-Bulletin* from 1961 to 2004 were:

1. The sale of the paper in 1961 to Chinn Ho and his *hui* (group) — the first non-Caucasian to own a major English-language daily newspaper in Hawai‘i;
2. The importation of chain ownership with the paper’s sale to Gannett in 1972;
3. The sale of the newspaper to Liberty Newspapers, a Gannett broker, when Gannett purchased the *Advertiser* in 1993; and
4. The sale of the newspaper in 2001 to a private owner and Canadian, David Black, who later added local and Canadian investors.

Interviewees often focused on changes in ownership in their interviews and their response to the changes. The changes usually came as a big surprise, and sometimes had a significant impact on their working lives. Staff members who weathered the changes in ownership the best focused on doing what they considered to be good journalism or used union contract negotiations as a form of resistance. Union life became another enduring characteristic of the culture of the *Star-Bulletin*. Some expressed exasperation and acceptance as a form of helplessness about ownership and management issues that were outside their control. In the next section, interviewees reflect on the impact that

ownership changes had on the *Star-Bulletin* and their working lives up to 1993. One of the most significant changes that Chinn Ho made was the establishment of the Joint Operating Agreement, which rerouted the paper's course forever by changing its relationship with the *Advertiser*.

The establishment of the Joint Operating Agreement

In 1961, just before the time of the sale and the establishment of the JOA, the *Advertiser* had been losing money; at the same time, the *Star-Bulletin* was about to lose the site of its printing plant for a new civic center (Chaplin: 289-290). The two papers were also in a costly circulation battle. The *Advertiser* reportedly had a \$72,395 net loss and the *Star-Bulletin's* income was \$896,973 (Chaplin: 281). The *Star-Bulletin's* circulation was over 100,000, and had nearly a 40,000 lead over the *Advertiser's* (Pratte: 210). It had grown immensely since 1916, when the *Star-Bulletin's* circulation was 6,000, which it said was larger than the *Advertiser's*.¹⁹ Most staff members interviewed were aware of the story about the *Star-Bulletin* saving the *Advertiser*, but commented that people in the community think it was the other way around because the *Advertiser* is the morning paper and the dominant one today (in 2004). One staff member recalls:

We saved the *Advertiser*. The *Advertiser* was ready to die. The JOA was negotiated specifically to save the two-newspaper city — that was the main

¹⁹ Comment from an interviewee. The story about circulation reductions is well known by *Star-Bulletin* employees.

purpose of the JOA. It was to save the *Advertiser*, because two voices have to be saved in Hawai'i, and the *Star-Bulletin* agreed to this JOA thing. And for a long time, when I first came, the *Star-Bulletin* had something like 127,000 circulation and the *Advertiser* had 50,000 or something, so really it was ready to die. But through the years, because they are the morning paper, they've been giving the people in Hawai'i the impression that they saved the *Star-Bulletin*.

The JOA was formalized June 2, 1962, was to run for 30 years, and profits were to be split 80 percent for the *Star-Bulletin* and 20 percent for the *Advertiser* for a limited time period after which the split would change to 60/40 and then 55/45. Each paper would get an \$800,000 editorial budget (Chaplin: 294). News/editorial operations were to be kept separate; business functions, such as circulation, advertising and production were handled together under the Hawaiian Newspaper Agency to reduce costs. Representatives from both newspapers ran the HNA.

The Sunday paper, which became a joint paper with both names on the nameplate, was to be produced by the *Advertiser*. It was called the *Sunday Star-Bulletin and Advertiser*.

It may have contributed to an impression in the community that the papers had the same owner and were essentially the same organization, something that has been a source of irritation to some of the staff members interviewed. When the JOA was set up, the *Star-Bulletin* moved from Merchant Street into the *Advertiser's* building on the corner of

Kapi'olani Boulevard and South Street in March 1962, where it stayed until March 2001. On March 15, 2001, the *Star-Bulletin* staff members marched down South Street to their new newsroom on the second floor in Building 7 at Restaurant Row.

Soon after the JOA was announced in 1962, the federal Justice Department began investigating the deal for violations of anti-trust laws — a theme that would emerge later in another twist when Gannett tried to shut down the *Star-Bulletin* in 1999 and it faced anti-trust law violations. A JOA had been established nearly 30 years before this one between two newspapers in Albuquerque, N.M., but joint operating agreements were not explicitly allowed under law until 1970. Twigg-Smith provided information that showed that the *Advertiser* would fail without the JOA, and the issue went away for a while, but former Mayor Frank Fasi continued to hammer away at what he said was a monopoly. Sen. Daniel Inouye and Hawai'i Rep. Spark Matsunaga took the lead in Congress in sponsoring the Newspaper Preservation Act in 1970 (Chaplin).²⁰ Later, it was made state law. Then, as in 1999, influential citizens in Hawai'i stepped forward to save a paper. Chaplin quotes Inouye as saying that the JOA could actually help preserve two independent editorial voices in a community, and that the community would not be served well if one failed. Interestingly, the *Advertiser* and the *Hawaiian Gazette* entered into a Joint Operating Agreement in 1894 (Chapin 1996: 87).

In 1972, Chinn Ho (he was always referred to by both names) with an Atherton

²⁰ Chaplin 1998. The *Advertiser* had supported Inouye for a U.S. Senate seat in 1962 instead of Ben Dillingham, whose family owned 12 percent of the *Advertiser*.

heir, Alexander, as a member, sold the paper to the Gannett Co. reportedly for \$25 million. Paul Miller, the chief executive officer of Gannett and the president of the Associated Press, was instrumental in the deal because of his contacts through the AP, in which most American newspapers have memberships. A staff member explained that Miller had met Chinn Ho in Hawai'i once, and put the deal together while retaining Chinn Ho's name on the masthead. He explained:

Miller's approach was, Gannett can make more money on these papers. We'll pay you for the paper and you can continue to have your name on the masthead. Chinn Ho sold the paper, and got his name on the masthead as the CEO until the day he died. Later Gannett appointed Stuart Ho (Chinn's son) to the board, and his name was on the masthead. That's a Gannett strategy. They buy the paper and let you leave your name on it if you want, which is what they did with the *Advertiser* too. They left Twigg-Smith's name on the masthead, and (former editor) George Chaplin's.

The Gannett executives most probably wanted to feel that the same people in the community were influencing the paper's direction, and to give it a local presence, particularly because people in Hawai'i might view an outsider with suspicion. Staff members were shocked to learn about the change. They would no longer be locally owned, and their trust was shattered:

When Chinn Ho bought it from the Farringtons we were all kind of happy about that because it was still a local paper. He really seemed to love the paper. He'd come over and have breakfast in the cafeteria. He was great to have as an owner. But then, one of his partners in the purchase of the paper got up at some function and said that it would be over his dead body that they would sell the *Star-Bulletin*. It wasn't long after that that they did sell the *Star-Bulletin*. And they sold us to Gannett. The "over my dead body" speech — we all remember that.

Another staff member commented on the change:

When Gannett came in it was just different. Things changed. We started having less and less local news, not because Gannett didn't want any local news, but because of the way Gannett is — more wire service. When Mauna Loa started erupting, photographers and reporters from New York and Boston were sending photographers there, and the *Star-Bulletin*, we were using AP pictures. That started changing later.²¹

All over the country independently owned newspapers were being sold to chains. One staff member's attitude is echoed by many of the others, who have felt the effects of cost-conscious ownership:

²¹ Gannett's strategy changed later to focus on local readership.

When I came (in the mid-70s), (the *Star-Bulletin*) it was in a transition from being an independently owned community newspaper to being part of a fledging monster corporation that was eating newspapers up left and right and whose primary goal was the bottom line. It was a real transitional period for many newspapers, and Gannett instigated that.

The Sunday paper was produced by the *Advertiser*. “It was very odd,” one former staff member commented:

What Gannett didn’t bother to find out, or no one told them, was that the Sunday paper was actually produced by the *Advertiser*. It was called the *Sunday Star-Bulletin & Advertiser*. That paper was a Gannett property, but none of us at the *Star-Bulletin* had anything to do with it until 1976.

Gannett was just at the beginning of its phenomenal growth into the largest newspaper chain in America, and the *Star-Bulletin* was its second largest property. At the time, Gannett had a relatively isolated operation in Rochester, New York. The company began acquiring companies throughout American, and started *USA TODAY* in 1982. Its headquarters moved to the suburbs outside Washington D.C. in the ‘80s, becoming a nationally focused media center. “It changed the whole corporate personality,” according to one staff member. The purchase of the *Star-Bulletin* was a pretty big deal at the time for Gannett, and something that people from Rochester weren’t used to dealing with.

“Someone had to deal with this big, very unusual property out here in the middle of the Pacific — a place that had six labor unions,” a former staff member recalled. The company had a reputation for being resistant to labor unions, but didn’t try to break the unions here.

The Chinn Ho *hui* had managed to keep out non-resident big money for a while, but mainland investment capital flowing into Hawai‘i finally won in 1972 after the death of editor Jim Couey. Gannett purchased the paper and entered into a deal with the Hawai‘i Newspaper Agency. The Joint Operating Agreement was extended for 50 years and set to expire at the end of 2042 instead of 1992. The *Star-Bulletin* said it would have autonomy and greater resources under Gannett, and that the paper “will remain the same locally-directed, community oriented paper that it has been since Alexander Atherton’s father helped to establish it in 1912.”²² But cost-cutting resulted in a slimmer paper. The Washington D.C. bureau was closed, and columns and an edition were canceled even while the paper was making money. It became a cash cow for Gannett.

Former *Advertiser* Editor George Chaplin (1998) explains why the *Advertiser* agreed to the change in the JOA: “*Advertiser* executives feared that as the date neared, the Hawai‘i Newspaper Agency, in which the *Star-Bulletin* had the majority voice, would let *Advertiser* circulation sharply slide — thus cutting any bargaining power the morning paper had in renewal of the agreement” (Chaplin 324). In fact the reverse happened for several reasons.

²² Chapin (1996: 312). She quotes the *Star-Bulletin*, August 3, 1971.

Philip T. Gialanella, who died in 1994, was brought out by Gannett to become publisher of HNA in 1975. He decided during the energy crisis of the 1970s to stop home delivery of the *Star-Bulletin* to the outer islands in favor of the *Advertiser* — the newspaper he preferred, according to one former staff member — to save money on delivery costs. Outer-island bureaus were cut. The decision hurt *Star-Bulletin* sales and infuriated outer-island customers who preferred the *Bulletin*, according to *Star-Bulletin* staff members. “The thinking was that the *Star-Bulletin* would gain that circulation back in the city rather than in the outer islands,” a staff member explained. In the early 1980s the *Star-Bulletin* was losing circulation, and when it became apparent that the *Advertiser* was gaining in sales, production deadlines were pushed back so there were more street sales for the lunchtime crowd. The paper had an eye-catching red headline on it, and that attracted readers. “They were putting those in the street boxes and pulling the *Advertiser* out of their boxes.” The strategy worked for a while, but it wasn’t enough. That, coupled with a nationwide decline in afternoon newspapers, bumped the *Bulletin* out of its dominant position when it had a circulation of over 130,000 compared with the *Advertiser’s* 77,000 in 1973 (Chaplin: 339). By the 1990s, the *Advertiser* was clearly the dominant newspaper in circulation. A former staff member recalls that:

Phil was the guy who controlled circulation. Before he became publisher in 1974, he, as head of HNA, made a move that turned circulation around to benefit the *Advertiser*. The *Star-Bulletin* never recovered from it. Phil decided it was too expensive to have two different delivery systems on the neighbor islands. It was

costing a fortune. It was during the energy crisis, and gasoline was costly. He decided that he would just have one delivery force. That's one part of it.

At the time, Gialanella wanted to raise the *Star-Bulletin's* rates, so he struck a deal with the *Advertiser* to get its support. He gave the *Advertiser* a circulation advantage on the neighbor islands and pulled back the *Star-Bulletin*. A staff member explained:

The pretext they used was the energy costs, the fact that they had two delivery forces out there. Phil said it was very unrealistic, that there is not a state in the country where you have to deliver a paper 200 miles away. But it blew up in his face. The people on the neighbor islands did not want the *Advertiser*; they wanted the *Star-Bulletin*. The *Star-Bulletin* was hugely popular on the neighbor islands.

A former editor wonders about whether HNA's decisions really hurt the paper:

There's a lot of accusation. If circulation was being suppressed, why isn't it taking off like a rocket now? There might have been some suppression, but was it really that significant? Evidently not.

Another staff member also had a different viewpoint because Gannett was in charge of the circulations of both papers as a result of the JOA:

When Gannett owned the *Star-Bulletin* before '93 when they sold it to Rupert, they did things that sort of helped the *Star-Bulletin's* circulation. At one point

when they took the *Star-Bulletins* out at late morning, early afternoon to put them in the box, they'd take the *Advertisers* out of the box next to them so there'd be only one paper there. They had the JOA then, so they could do things like that to push the circulation one way or another. They could argue that they could sell more papers and make more money that way.

During the Gialanella years, the newspaper had become increasingly “corporatized,” more so than Gannett executives wanted. One former staff member reflects on that time:

In Washington, which ultimately became headquarters, they would make fun of the *Star-Bulletin's* corporate ass-kissing. He was doing more than what was desired. It wasn't respected by corporate as a newspaper. I remember there was some industry convention out here – APME or something – in the late 70s or early 80s, and their coverage of it was just so shameless. You know, page after page of covering Gannett officials there, and people who were associated with Gannett.

Later, in the 1980s when the economy was tough, Gannett started cutting the budget. “They considered the *Star-Bulletin* fixed and were moving on to other priorities,” a former editor said. Things changed at the paper, along with the economy:

We became the underdog in 1993. During the Gialanella years, I thought the character was lost. There was a period there when the *Star-Bulletin* was not the *Star-Bulletin*. I think it is still because some of the key people are still there.

But many staff members interviewed said they thought Gannett had planned to shut down the *Star-Bulletin* all along. Gannett executives had a history of surprises, so the journalists, always suspicious of those in power, said they felt uncertain about their future and powerless to do anything about it:

People think it was Gannett's plan to fold the paper all along, to get rid of the *Star-Bulletin*, and they were really salivating, getting the *Advertiser*. Gannett bought us, and Phil Gialanella, he's the big boss of Gannett West – the big boss here, all of a sudden quit Gannett and then went to the *Advertiser* and became publisher there, and maybe it's a coincidence that in all this time, Gannett stopped circulation of the *Star-Bulletin* in the outer islands, and we started retrenching more. Our circulation became small, and the *Advertiser* started going up. Then one day, all these Gannett people just went to us and told us that they sold us and they bought the *Advertiser*. After telling us that they put on *Advertiser* shirts and went across the hallway.

Their act of changing their shirts was a blatant symbol of their power to discard the *Star-Bulletin* and take on the *Advertiser*. It was representation of the power they had

to take Gannett's money and invest it across the hallway, and to change their identity outwardly and physically through the act of changing their *aloha* shirts. The fact that they understood the significance of donning the shirts was further evidence of the colonization of both papers by powerful mainland interests.

In May 1986, Gialanella (often called Gianella by staff), announced he had joined the *Advertiser* as publisher and president of the media division of Persis, the newspaper's parent company (Chaplin: 337). It was well known that he wanted to stay in Hawai'i and not move up in Gannett. He was known as a "Gannett man," which meant to newsroom staff that he was bottom-line oriented and "ruthless," according to some. Stuart Ho, Chinn Ho's son, became chairman of Gannett Pacific after his father's death in 1987, so there was still some local leadership.

Star-Bulletin circulation could have also been affected by changing readership habits and a changing economy that affected advertising and newsprint prices. Nationwide, afternoon dailies were dying because readers were switching to the morning paper or turning to television. The *Star-Bulletin*, as the afternoon paper, had been popular in Hawai'i because of the plantation economy – workers got off in the afternoon and read the paper then — and because of the time difference with the mainland U.S. The paper would print the day's news, including closing stock prices from New York, and still make it for home delivery. People in Hawai'i may have the impression that because of the *Star-Bulletin's* circulation decline, the *Advertiser* has always been the dominant paper, an annoyance that one staff member expresses:

Through the years, because they are the morning paper, they've been giving the people in Hawaii the impression that they saved the *Star-Bulletin*. Afternoon papers are dying all over the United States. In Hawai'i it's kind of different because of our hours — the time difference. People here are still doing their work when the rest of the nation is sleeping. There is nothing you can read in the *Advertiser* that you didn't see on TV before you went to bed.

The JOA set up a business relationship that could have been a factor in depressing the *Star-Bulletin's* circulation in favor of the *Advertiser's* beginning in the 1970s and ultimately shifted the *Advertiser* into the dominant position. In turn, the identity of the *Star-Bulletin* and its staff shifted to that of the underdog, and many union rank-and-file staff members in particular came to resent Gannett. A dichotomous power relationship was becoming entrenched between Gannett and staff members. Management staff had less of a problem; they said Gannett had always treated them well, but they sometimes complained about bureaucracy.

In 1993, another change in the JOA set up the conditions in the newsroom that gave *Star-Bulletin* reporters the freedom to write award-winning stories in the 1990s without fear of retaliation by advertisers. In 1993 when Gannett bought the *Advertiser* and sold the *Star-Bulletin* to Rupert Phillips of Liberty Newspapers, the JOA was renegotiated so that Gannett controlled and owned all business operations and Phillips and the *Star-Bulletin* had a guaranteed income no matter what happened to circulation or

advertising. This business relationship would have a profound, liberating effect on journalism at the paper, a theme that emerges in the narratives that follow in the next chapters. The structure of the JOA was unique in the country, but it set up the conditions for the announcement later to close the paper.

Ownership and Economics 1993 to 2004:

Liberation and Uncertainty

Absentee ownership of the *Star-Bulletin* throughout most of the 1990s came as a mixed blessing for staff. It gave them incredible reporting and design freedom, but there was always that uncertainty that the good times wouldn't last and that the *Star-Bulletin's* days were numbered.

On Feb. 1, 1993, Gannett bought the *Advertiser* for \$250 million and sold the *Star-Bulletin* to Phillips and his Liberty Newspapers because "it saw greater opportunity in the morning field," Smyser (2001) said in an interview. Phillips was a Florida newspaperman and longtime Gannett broker and investor. *Star-Bulletin* staff were stunned when John Curley, Gannett's chairman and chief executive officer, announced the news to them, then crossed the hall to the *Advertiser* newsroom and put on an *Advertiser aloha* shirt to make the parallel announcement there. The JOA was renegotiated to give Gannett total control over advertising, production and circulation at both newspapers and would expire in 2012. Liberty could sell the paper only with Gannett's consent. Profits under the old JOA were split, with 60 percent going to the *Star-Bulletin* and Gannett, and 40 percent going to the *Advertiser*. Under the new JOA, 100 percent of profits went to the *Advertiser* and Gannett. The *Star-Bulletin* and Phillips would get a guaranteed payment every year, rising to \$2.5 million by 2012.

The deal shocked staff on both newspapers; the *Advertiser* was no longer run by a missionary descendent. Former *Advertiser* editor George Chaplin (1998) commented in his book: “Clearly the *Advertiser* had shifted from almost a century of ownership by a local family to an outpost of American corporate journalism. One era had ended and another had begun” (p. 348). Chapin (1996) notes that *Advertiser* staff members had been accustomed to looking down on the *Star-Bulletin*. In an interview, *Advertiser* Editorial Page Editor Jerry Burris told her “All of a sudden they are us” (Chapin 1996: 315).

After a time, *Star-Bulletin* staff came to appreciate the agreement because Phillips was a hands-off owner. He left the leadership of the paper to Executive Editor John Flanagan and Managing Editor David Shapiro. Flanagan generally left news operations to Shapiro. Shapiro remembers his response to the announcement of the sale:

After the hurricane (Iniki) crisis passed, I go in my office; there’s a stack of stuff this high and think I’m going to be buried for the rest of the year. And I start looking through it. And there’s all this Gannett bureaucratic stuff – budget slashes and well-done awards, diversity reports, management by objective reports, News 2000 reports, and I think, jeez, if they’re going to sell my ass why should I fill out all this paperwork. And I just threw it all away. I got through my pile in half a day. It was then I realized that if I survive at the *Star-Bulletin* under new ownership, my life is going to get a lot less bureaucratic.²³

²³ Interview with David Shapiro, Nov. 14, 2001.

Shapiro shifted from working in a tall hierarchical structure to a flatter one where he felt empowered. It was under Shapiro's passionate watch that reporters felt free to follow their occupational calling as the watchdog of all those in power — and not just politicians. They went after the sacred cows — car dealerships, grocery stores, and gas companies. A story by Rob Perez on high gasoline prices prompted a state investigation that brought down gas prices, and Safeway dropped its prices on broccoli the day he interviewed a company representative.

A former staff member recalls those days fondly, and a series by Perez called “What Price Paradise?” that showed higher prices in Hawai‘i compared with West Coast prices:

Journalistically it was the best thing that happened to us. It was a reasonably generous budget in terms of being able to fund travel and training and all that stuff we wanted to do. But Rupert was an absentee owner. We rarely heard from him. In some ways we were the most editorially independent newspaper in America. We didn't have to worry about advertisers being pissed off, so we could do something like What Price Paradise? and not worry about having retail advertisers up in arms. We just didn't have those pressure points on us.

When companies cancelled ads in anger over the *Star-Bulletin's* coverage, it hurt Gannett and the *Advertiser's* bottom line, but did nothing to the *Star-Bulletin* and Rupert Phillips' bottom line. That was a situation unique in American for-profit journalism and

that is why *Star-Bulletin* staffers boasted they had more freedom than journalists at any newspaper in America.

In the 1990s, media companies across America were merging. There was intense, unprecedented pressure on profits. When Gannett came to Hawai‘i to purchase the *Star-Bulletin* in 1972, it was a small chain based in Rochester, N.Y., and the *Star-Bulletin* was its second largest property. By 1993 when its executives decided to buy the *Advertiser*, Gannett was a huge chain with over 80 newspapers. It had established *USA Today* in the 1980s by financially draining cash cows such as the *Star-Bulletin* and other newspapers until the new paper could stand on its own. Gannett executives were used to getting their way, competing fiercely and sometimes unethically to close down competitors. Richard McCord documents such aggressive practices by Gannett staff in his book *The Chain Gang: One Newspaper versus the Gannett Empire* (1996). When David Black came to speak to the Honolulu Community Media Council on Dec. 12, 2000, he was handed a copy of that book. The council members probably liked what they heard when he said he understood their concern about control by mainland Americans, and the need to keep the *Star-Bulletin* “local.” He vowed to “teach the Eastern-loving monopoly bureaucracy a good lesson.” At that same speech he called Vancouver Island, where his corporate office was, the “sixth” island. He said he wanted to “build on the spirit of Save Our *Star-Bulletin*.” As a Canadian from Western Canada, he said he fully understood dominance by outsiders and by Eastern-based businesses.

Black represented many of the values of the journalists and was readily accepted by them, particularly because he did not own a big chain of newspapers like Gannett did. By comparison, he was a small independent businessman. He was a lone Western cowboy out to save the *Star-Bulletin*. His actions showed him to be shrewd businessman who seemed to understand how to appeal to local values. He was humble, the little David up against Goliath, and he could live with lower profits than the big mainland company needed. Within a few years of purchasing the paper, he had brought in local investors and set up long-term deals with advertisers.

In the 1980s and 1990s, newspapers were an attractive, profitable business, with returns of 20 and even 40 percent in some cases. The rise of broadcast, with its returns of 30 to 40 percent, put increasing pressure on newspapers and newspaper chains to boost profits, most of which diversified out of newspapers and added television, radio and entertainment media to their interests, or were bought by companies that traditionally have had no experience with media or with news. Gannett, for example, tightly managed its newspapers, rewarded managers for reaching short-term profit goals, and rated newspapers against its News 2000 marketing strategy for reaching readers. Mike McManus called it *Market-Driven Journalism* (1994) in a book by the same name. It has raised concerns among journalists because they have felt the pressure to avoid offending advertisers and owners' interests.

Concerns about media barons and corporate power are not new; what's different now is that only a handful of companies control the media worldwide. In 2004, according

to the *Columbia Journalism Review*, there were 44 major media companies controlling most of the media in the world, including radio, television, magazines, cinema and newspapers; in America, there are a handful of companies with vast holdings.²⁴ Mergers are changing those numbers daily. Critics like Robert McChesney (1999), Ben Bagdikian (1997) and James Fallows (1996) say this threatens democracy. For the first time in the history of American journalism, news and public journalism have been integrated into the highest levels of financial and non-journalistic corporate control. Companies with interests in chemicals, lumber and movies now also have an interest in news media. At issue, says Bagdikian, is “the possession of power to surround almost every man, woman and child in the country with controlled images and words, to socialize each new generation of Americans, to alter the political agenda of the country” (1997: ix). With the pressure to cut staff to boost profits, there has been a loss of journalistic quality. The result has been a homogenization of media. “The media look more alike than ever” (Bagdikian 1997: 6-7).

Yet newspapers have always served the interests of those who owned them. The history of the *Star-Bulletin* shows that quite clearly, particularly with regards to the Farrington family and its crusade for statehood. But this was about an issue, and not specifically about company profits and pushing for unprecedented returns on investments. Later money, not a crusade, became the most important issue for the owners. Gannett cut costs to increase profits from what was already a profitable paper.

²⁴ *Columbia Journalism Review* website: “Who owns what,” <http://www.CJR.org>

When profits become the primary motivation, critics argue, newspapers lose their credibility.

Two recent trends have been significant for the *Star-Bulletin* and represent a dramatic change from the previous 100 years. One is this predominance of the profit motive — a national trend in the commodification of news. James D. Squires, former editor of *The Chicago Tribune* and author of *Read All About It: The Corporate Takeover of America's Newspapers* (1993), argues that newspapers have lost their character as the trusted channel between the government and the governed. They are as vulnerable as any other business in today's environment. “Under the new order, the news medium is no longer an institution dedicated to the public interest but rather a business run solely in the interest of the highest possible level of profitability” (Squires, 1994: 10). This point seems to belabor the obvious to many media critics who have long considered all media, not just news, as being commodified.

In another view, Benjamin Compaine and Douglas Gomery (2000), in an extensive study of media ownership, say they can find no evidence that large corporations hurt editorial content. They conclude from their research that good newspapering is a function of many variables. They assert that most studies have found that readers perceive little difference between competing and non-competing newspapers, or that competition guarantees a free marketplace of ideas. They find little evidence that a lack of local competition itself produces inferior journalism. In fact, they assert that in a competitive situation, inferior, sensationalist and advocacy journalism can result from an

effort to attract readers (pp. 41-42). The authors reject the media monopoly conspiracy theory; the structure of the industry is far more complex. Questions about “Who owns the media?” (the economic structure) as well as “how the corporations operate in the real world” (media conduct) need to be examined (Compaine and Gomery: 508). They also acknowledge that the history of the company plays an important role, and that “institutions vary by ownership, market conditions and technological change” (p. 508). They suggest that the link between industrial structure and corporate conduct and performance needs to be studied in more depth and more conclusively. Nevertheless, there is the perception among those in the news business, that their credibility has been compromised by pressures they feel from the business side of journalism. These perceptions show up in the narratives of the interviews of the *Star-Bulletin* employees as commercial power interests increasingly dominate the culture of the newsroom. Here, Martin’s fragmentation perspective is helpful in understanding the shift over time in culture, which was not fixed but had a basis in power relationships among owners and the journalists. The contrast between the passion for journalism exhibited by the oldtimers and the cynicism about the news business from the younger staff members is evident. The Rupert Phillips period was so liberating precisely because staff members felt free from previous corporate pressures under Gannett.

In Hawai‘i, pressure to produce higher profits had been linked to non-resident chain ownership. The pressure is even more intense now that there is competition for the first time in advertising and because the *Star-Bulletin* has some local owners. But there

doesn't appear to be any direct correlation between non-resident ownership and profit pressure. It has been an intense struggle for survival. Kent (1993) emphasizes this interplay between outsider interests and local interests as crucial to understanding Hawai'i's history. He places this "dialectic" within dependency theory to sharpen our understanding of the importance of the relationship between global capital and local development. According to Kent:

The real strength of the dependency model as an analytical tool derives precisely from its orientation toward dynamism, its concern with assembling patterns of intersystemic and international linkages, and its use of history as an instrument to reveal the dynamics of social change and transformation (1993: 5).

Kent explains that pressures from the center — the mainland in this case — have directed development in the islands, and that elites have played a critical role in facilitating a change into an economy dominated by tourism (Kent: 6). He applies this model on a broader scale than I do in this study, but it is useful in understanding the macro influences on the economics and ownership structure that had such a profound influence on the culture of the *Star-Bulletin* as an organization, particularly in more recent times. For example, Senator Dan Inouye, who sponsored the Newspaper Preservation Act in 1970, had a political interest in the survival of two daily establishment newspapers in Hawai'i. He was part of the Washington D.C. and Hawai'i elites, and used his connections between the center and the periphery. The move by

Gannett in 2001 to close the *Star-Bulletin* and dismantle the JOA had a profound effect on both papers. It created a crisis that mobilized political elites in Hawai'i to organize resistance by unions, advertisers, readers and staff. The crisis helped to cement a survivalist, underdog culture at the *Star-Bulletin*, which Black capitalized on while appealing to local anti-outsider sentiments.

Has non-resident ownership made a difference in how news staff members feel about journalism and their jobs and their identity as *Star-Bulletin* staff? Their narratives will show mixed feelings about this, depending on the ownership structure and competitive pressures.

This study of the *Star-Bulletin* suggests that the changing market conditions, ownership and management structure of the paper have affected both the corporate conduct and performance of the paper and consequently the culture and identity of the newspaper. An economic analysis of the market structure of daily newspapers in Hawai'i is beyond the scope of this study, but it is necessary to discuss ownership changes, organization structure, leadership and market pressures to better understand how culture is shaped and expressed at the *Star-Bulletin*. The newspaper had been through several momentous changes with previous sales, but the biggest one so far was the sale to David Black and the events that led up to that.

David Black and the Save Our Star-Bulletin Crisis

In the fall of 1999 after Gannett tried to buy out the Liberty interest and shut down the paper, the state government sued Liberty and Gannett for anti-trust violations. Black began publishing a new *Star-Bulletin* on March 15, 2001. After Sept. 11, 2001, belt-tightening and intense rivalry between the two dailies for advertising dollars and circulation put a strain on everyone. The *Star-Bulletin*, once predicting new circulation figures of up to 100,000 from about 60,000 at the time of the sale, struggled to hold on; meanwhile the *Advertiser* handed out discounted subscriptions to boost its reported Monday-Saturday circulation figures to 142,000 in January 2004.²⁵ The competition was still intense throughout 2004, and with a new printing plant in production in the summer, *Star-Bulletin* staff wondered again about the future of the paper, while reflecting on the past.

It was “Broken Trust,” one of the biggest stories of the century, that staff members credit with helping to save the paper. The essay, published on August 9, 1997, by five prominent leaders of the native Hawaiian and legal communities, called for an investigation in the trustees’ mismanagement of Kamehameha Schools/Bishop Estate. The opinion piece criticized the highly paid trustees for mismanaging and squandering for their personal needs the assets of a \$10 billion charitable trust and Kamehameha Schools, set up in the 19th Century to educate Hawaiian children. The state Supreme Court, which selected the trustees, and the state government as a whole also became

²⁵ Audit Bureau of Circulations, January 2004 figures: <http://abcas2.accessabc.com/ecirc/newssearchus.as>

implicated in the story. The story was offered first to *Advertiser* Editor Jim Gatti, who, with the assistance of Editorial Page Editor Jerry Burris, asked for revisions. Gatti also wanted time for those who were being accused to respond, according to an editorial Gatti wrote to counter criticism after the story ran in the *Star-Bulletin* on August 16, 1997.

Different accounts of what happened at the *Advertiser* have been told, but one thing is clear: Gatti sat on the story too long. Critics say that because he was a relative newcomer brought by Gannett to the islands, he failed to see the significance of the story. It was the first time that prominent Hawaiians had come forward to publicly criticize the wealthy and influential trustees. The *Star-Bulletin's* Shapiro, raised in Hilo, saw its significance and ran it immediately. It was an opinion piece; opinion pieces are normally run without asking for response first from those criticized in the story — those who are accused then are offered space in a later issue in which to rebut the accusation. University of Hawai'i law professor Randall Roth took the piece across the hall to Shapiro after repeated efforts to get the *Advertiser* to publish it. Shapiro and *Star-Bulletin* Editorial Page Editor Diane Chang wrote the famous headline and gave it big play over three pages. As a result of the piece, the five trustees were eventually ousted and their huge salaries were cut.

One staff member explained the prevailing attitude about the story at the *Star-Bulletin*:

The *Advertiser* had that story; they had it. They absolutely did not understand.

They looked at it and said, well, all this stuff has been said before. What was

important about that story was who said it. The point being is that suddenly there

were noted people in the community standing up and questioning Kamehameha Schools, the sacred cow. That was the story. Those are the people in charge. They missed out because of their mainland centrism. (Jerry) Burriss saw it, but he's not in charge. It was Gatti primarily.

But another former staff member's view differed from the popular anti-*Advertiser* one:

I don't criticize Jim Gatti for that. I'd have the same amount of caution about rushing to get into print accusations against people. Things have to be checked out. It wasn't an opinion piece, but it was presented as a cumulative document with research to support it. Gatti was appropriate in challenging it. What appeared in the *Star-Bulletin* reflected (editing) changes that had been made by the *Advertiser*.

But for many staff members interviewed, "Broken Trust" was one of the defining moments in the life of the *Star-Bulletin*, and was responsible for saving the paper because it demonstrated the need for two newspapers. For them, "Broken Trust" defined the difference between the *Advertiser* and the *Star-Bulletin*. In a story in *American Journalism Review* on "Broken Trust," Lucinda Fleeson calls the *Star-Bulletin* "spunky" and "scrappy." Gatti and the *Advertiser* are painted as arrogant — rebuffing efforts by

Roth to get the piece published, although they did say they had definite plans to publish it. She says:

For the spunky *Star-Bulletin*, it was another chapter in a 118-year history of independent stands that have challenged the establishment. While retaining its motto as “The Pulse of Paradise,” the paper soon adopted a new slogan: “We Make Waves”.²⁶

As a result of “Broken Trust” and other award-winning stories, the community may have been more aware of the need for two independent editorial voices, staff members said. So, when Phillips announced two years later on Sept. 16, 1999 that the *Star-Bulletin* would be closing, a citizens’ group quickly formed and filed a lawsuit to keep the paper open. Gannett and Liberty Newspapers agreed to end the JOA and close the *Star-Bulletin* on Oct. 30, 1999. Phillips would be paid \$26.5 million in lieu of the rest of the guaranteed income he would have received over the life of the JOA. The newsroom staff faced layoffs. When Phillips made the announcement to *Star-Bulletin* staff that day, News Editor Steven Petranik asked him how much Phillips was making on the *Star-Bulletin*. He said he was earning 12 percent — but that he could make 20 percent or more on the mainland. Shortly after the announcement, the *Star-Bulletin* sign that had hung on the outside of the three-story building was taken down; *Star-Bulletin* news boxes

²⁶ Lucinda Fleeson, “The Pulse of Paradise,” *American Journalism Review*, January/February 2001, pp. 44-51.

were pulled off the street and painted over, and subscribers were being called and told they needed to switch to the *Advertiser*.

Star-Bulletin newsroom staff members were stunned and angered:

We felt betrayed. Rupert (Phillips) had made promises to us. He told us just a few years earlier that we had the most secure jobs in the newspaper industry. We believed him because it made us feel better, but we always had a suspicion that the future wasn't so secure because, after all, Rupert worked closely with Gannett and shared Gannett's values.

But another editor had a different view: it was all about business:

We all worked for Gannett. Gannett signed all our paychecks. Staff members were accepting paychecks from a corporation, and they felt betrayed when the corporation behaved like a corporation. If you get in bed with alligators, you have to expect to get bit eventually. A corporation puts profits ahead of people; they're going to make the best business decisions for the shareholders they answer to.

Investigative reporter Ian Lind published a diary online about the events that was called "Final Days: A newsroom diary."²⁷ Right after the announcement of the closure, Wayne Cahill of the Newspaper Guild and ILWU chief Lono Kane (Fleeson 2001) went

²⁷ Ian Lind, "Final Days? A newsroom diary," Sept. 15, 1999.
http://home.hawaii.rr.com/chesneylind/sb_diary.htm

to Governor Ben Cayetano's office to ask for help. At first the governor was reluctant to do anything as he was not particularly enamored with the newspapers. An article in the *Star-Bulletin* about a week later said that the governor thought nothing could be done legally to prevent the closure of the paper. The story quotes Cayetano:

If anything, if someone has a great deal of capital to invest, maybe he could invest in a morning newspaper, but that seems highly unlikely because the *Advertiser* has such a hold on the market now. So I'm hopeful that out of all of this . . . the *Advertiser* will become a better newspaper. Certainly, they should have more resources at their disposal. Perhaps they will be able to provide the kind of reporting with the kind of substance that the *Los Angeles Times* has.²⁸

Cayetano did ask state Attorney General Earl Anzai to look into the monopoly situation, and he said he believed the *Star-Bulletin's* fate was sealed in 1993 when Gannett sold the paper to Liberty newspapers and bought the *Advertiser*. He also questioned whether the *Star-Bulletin* should have been put up for sale before the announcement of the closure. "Doing so would comply with the spirit and intent of the Newspaper Preservation Act, which in this case has failed," the story quoted Cayetano as saying.

Richard Port, former state Democratic Party chairman and plaintiff who helped

²⁸ Pat Omandam, "Cayetano says Newspaper Preservation Act has failed the Star-Bulletin," *Star-Bulletin*, Friday, September 21, 1999, p. A-13.

form Save Our *Star-Bulletin*, said he thought that “someone must have spoken to him” because a week after the plaintiffs filed their lawsuit on Oct. 6, the attorney general’s office issued a temporary restraining order, and then a temporary injunction to keep the paper open until the case could be heard. After all, one paper would mean one voice, which could work for or against a politician. The two daily English-language newspapers set the news agenda, and other media followed. After the announcement of the closure, union members had called a meeting at the ILWU temporary headquarters, as their permanent home was being renovated. “It was a pretty good group of people,” said Port, former Democratic Party chairman and one of the plaintiffs who filed the lawsuit. He and the union members and other plaintiffs had strong community connections, and they got the ball rolling. He was invited to the meeting along with former Lieutenant Governor Jean King; former Lieutenant Governor Thomas Gill; Kekoa Kaapu, publisher of the Hawaii Public Interest Advocate and former county council member; former University of Hawai‘i regent and union leader Ah Quon McElrath; *Star-Bulletin* advertiser Alice Clay, and former *Star-Bulletin* reporter and Media Council member Ah Jook Ku. Port came up with the SOS name at the meeting. The group’s leaders also went around to three-quarters of the neighborhood boards and got them to oppose a one-newspaper town. Port explained:

The motivation was two-fold: to ensure that there wouldn’t be just one newspaper — a monopoly — I guess you could say in terms of anti-trust; and the other motivation, one of having separate voices in the community, multiple voices

primarily, although it did come down to advertising voices too because had the paper folded, the one paper could have gone sky-high on its rates.²⁹

The resistance to the closure was framed in terms of two editorial *and* commercial voices, whereas the spirit of the Newspaper Preservation Act focused on saving an editorial voice. And, the *Star-Bulletin* and *Advertiser* were set up as the dominant voices in the islands. Other newspapers or media outlets were not mentioned because they did not represent establishment views, nor was their readership as large as the dailies.

King also said she got involved to maintain a two-newspaper town, “both in terms of the quality and reporting of news coverage and the variety of syndicated articles in terms of readers.”³⁰ In addition, there would be a stronger tendency to maintain competitive rates. Gannett and Liberty appealed the injunction, but lost. Gannett argued that the *Star-Bulletin* was losing money, but wouldn’t open its books for scrutiny. And, it argued that it had the right under the First Amendment not to publish.

Lind changed the title of his online diary to reflect a cautious optimism in the newsroom. Lind said he made:

...a small but symbolic change by adding the question mark in the title of this page (from the affirmative “Final Days” to “Final Days?”). This reflects the

²⁹ Telephone interview with Richard Port, Jan. 21, 2004.

³⁰ Conversation with Jean King, 2001.

growing sense that there could be something other than a tragic end to this adventure.³¹

The diary reflected his anxiety but hope about the future, anger and extreme dislike of Gannett. He chronicled the difficulties newsroom staff members were going through during the crisis. *Advertiser* editors began interviewing them for jobs, and 19 of the 90 were offered jobs. That created an uncomfortable, divisive climate between the haves and the have-nots in the newsroom, but was reaffirming for those who were offered jobs. Lind, who did not stay on at the paper, describes the conflicts newsroom employees felt — the conflict culture they worked in daily while facing the contradictions between a need for personal survival and a calling to save the paper. Lind said:

The interview process is painful. No one really wants to work for a newspaper which we have competed with. It's hard to maintain a professional attitude when we've tried so hard to kick their butts and produce a better newspaper, a battle we were winning. And most of us believe that Gannett set up the *Star-Bulletin* for failure and finally orchestrated the pulling of the plug. But they're covered by the same Newspaper Guild contract and salary scale, which is far above any other competing local media. And money speaks with a certain terrible clarity. A fiery

³¹ Lind, *ibid.*

two-page anonymous letter goes up on the bulletin board in the newsroom, an impassioned plea to fight to the end for the *Star-Bulletin's* survival.³²

It was probably the most difficult time for *Star-Bulletin* staff in the history of the newspaper. They were writing award-winning stories for a newspaper being published by a company that wanted to shut it down and that handled all its circulation, advertising and distribution functions – without any motivation to keep it alive. No one in the newsroom knew how long they would have jobs, so they started job-hunting, and it was next to impossible to hire staff. At one point, the judge did not allow the *Advertiser* to “raid” or hire *Star-Bulletin* staff. Newsroom staff members reflected on that time, expressing feelings that, even though they were the underdog, they would continue to keep their spirits up and do good journalism:

The oldtimers were more exasperated at the whole thing. Like, This is the latest chapter in the tumultuous story of the *Star-Bulletin*. They were less feisty than the ones who had come much more recently. I think they just kind of plodded along and did their work and didn't really get that emotional about it.

The staff reacted very well. We continued to put a respectable product on the street. There was still something there worth saving a year a half later despite all

³² Lind, *ibid.*, Sept. 23, 1999.

the tensions and worries about whether our staff would still have jobs. That speaks volumes.

People were leaving. It was impossible to fill jobs. We were promoting interns and clerks to do professional-level jobs. But people bonded and held together.

Interestingly, those editors responsible for “Broken Trust,” Chang and Shapiro, did not stay on at David Black’s *Star-Bulletin*. Shapiro suffered health problems that were aggravated by the intense stress and long hours. He explained his role in helping to save the paper:

I stayed around until July, some time before I couldn't physically continue. I got a call from David Black after I'd already gone out sick. He was obviously seriously interested in buying the paper. I knew it wasn't going to win me any friends with Liberty and Gannett, with whom I was trying to negotiate disability benefits, but I offered to help Black prepare his purchase offer. I wanted to save the jobs of my coworkers if nothing else. I did a lot of work for him even though I wasn't ever in his employ.³³

Communication with staff was difficult for Shapiro during the crisis because of a couple of online diaries.³⁴ Lind, for example, sat near the water cooler — a good

³³ Interview with David Shapiro, Nov. 14, 2001.

³⁴ Burl Burlingame also published a weblog.

place to hear the latest gossip. He said he honored requests not to put information on the website. Shapiro commented that:

We (newsroom staff) did good work during that period. There were difficult things, like the online newsletters, that made it difficult to communicate with staff. There were things I knew that could have offered the staff comfort, or might have alarmed them, things they probably should know in planning for their future. But I just couldn't say, because if I held a staff meeting, it was the equivalent of calling a news conference, and it would be broadcast over the Internet to the whole damn world.

Journalists don't necessarily act like members of other organizations in crises, who might not speak about their situation. Journalists think of the situation as a good news story — one that begs to be covered. Public online newsletters appear when their personal interests are at stake, which could put their jobs in jeopardy.

A group was formed briefly to look into an employee purchase of the paper “in order to preserve the historic institution and its second daily editorial voice.”³⁵ It held a sign-waving rally on the day before the proposed closure date of Oct. 29, 1999. SOS held meetings and had handouts explaining Gannett's connection with Rupert Phillips and instances across the country where Gannett had used Phillips to acquire papers or act as a broker and then shut them down, or where the two were operating in the same market to

³⁵ Press release from Hawaii People To Buy And Save Our *Star-Bulletin*, Monday, Oct. 11, 1999.

each other's mutual benefit. "Stop the Shutdown of the *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*," read the petition that Port and others distributed at Aloha Stadium, the Punahou Carnival and other places. He reportedly got more than 15,000 signatures, although he's not sure that people always knew the difference between the two papers because the *Advertiser* and *Star-Bulletin* had jointly published the Sunday paper for years.³⁶ Port explained how he and others got so many signatures:

We went out to Aloha Stadium, both for the football games, and I think there were other activities out there, and collected thousands of signatures. Ninety percent of the people were very happy to sign. It was partially citizen-driven. I got my friends who believed as I did that this shouldn't happen, and they helped out going out there.

I would go up to a group with three clipboards, and we would pair off, and people would say: We'll all sign. They were not interested in jobs at all. They were interested in separate voices.³⁷

The community appeared to oppose a one-newspaper town. The *Star-Bulletin's* closure was characterized in the rest of the local press as a bad deal for the public. The *Honolulu Weekly* titled its edition on the subject as an EXTRA! Bob Rees' story was

³⁶ Interview with Richard Port, January 21, 2004.

³⁷ Ibid.

headlined: “Star-Bulletin shot down! The Advertiser and Gannett rejoice! Honolulu readers get screwed (in red type).³⁸ Even an *Advertiser* headline said: “Citizens denounce effort to shut paper: Leaders say motive is greed.”³⁹ McElrath was quoted as saying “the greed of corporations and individuals” is the cause of plans to close the newspaper and “deny Hawai‘i’s citizens diversity in news sources.” The Newspaper Guild and the ILWU organized a protest in front of the News Building while Gannett executives watched from the third floor. At an SOS meeting, Jean King wrote a rally song:

Another Voice
 Another Choice
 Let’s Save Our Star-Bulletin Now!

It’s Our Goal
 Not to Have That Hole
 That’d Be There If It Were Pau

What A Deal For Phillips
 What A Steal For Gannett
 What A Loss For The Rest Of Us Here
 We’re Going To Nip That Caper

To Make Us A Town With One Paper
 Fight Back, Not Just Shed A Tear

Save Our Star-Bulletin Now!
 We’ll Rally, And How
 To This Shafting We Won’t Bow

³⁸ Bob Rees, *Star-Bulletin* shot down. *Honolulu Weekly*, September 29- October 5, 1999, p. 1 & 6-8.

³⁹ Walter Wright, “Citizens denounce effort to shut paper: Leaders say motive is greed,” the *Advertiser*, Monday Oct. 18, 1999, B1.

Another Voice
 Another Choice
 Let's Save Our Star-Bulletin Now!⁴⁰

The paper was referred to as “our” *Star-Bulletin*. Gannett was characterized as the big, greedy mainland company. The *Advertiser*, in defense of Gannett, explained in stories that the *Star-Bulletin's* fate had already sealed when the JOA was renegotiated in 1993 so that Phillips owned nothing — only an agreement to operate the paper, and that Gannett already had a big edge at that time. A story and graphic told of how Gannett bought the *Advertiser* because of an “industry trend of weakening and folding afternoon papers.”⁴¹ A *Star-Bulletin* sub-headline said, “Owners cite declining circulation and revenue as reasons for the shutdown.”⁴² But Gannett had image problems nationwide, and it had difficulty persuading the public of its position. The “wave” of public, union and Democratic Party support for the *Star-Bulletin*, driven by years of strong anti-outsider sentiment, was too strong for Gannett to ride.

In 1999 there were no assets at the *Star-Bulletin* to speak of in financial terms, just a 67,000 daily circulation compared with the *Advertiser's* 104,000 circulation (Gomes 1999). But what about the “assets” that the staff members brought to the newspaper, and the rich history of the *Star-Bulletin* and its relationship with its community? These external environmental factors and influences — called “goodwill” in

⁴⁰ Jean King, October 5, 1999, Save Our *Star-Bulletin* meeting.

⁴¹ Andrew Gomes, “1993 revision gave Gannett a big edge,” *the Advertiser*, October 31, 1999, A3.

⁴² *Star-Bulletin* staff, “*Star-Bulletin* will close Oct. 30 after 117 years,” *Star-Bulletin*, Sept. 16, 1999, A1.

business language — are often ignored. They are difficult to measure, but they became an important rallying point for SOS supporters, who used the Hawai‘i-versus-the-mainland tension to their advantage. So, when David Black bought the paper for \$10,000, he was buying more than circulation lists; he purchased an institution that was important to Hawai‘i’s citizens because it provided a second voice and prevented a monopoly for newspaper advertisers. The emotional dialectic proved to be the glue that encouraged those to sign petitions, whether they really saw a substantial difference between the two papers. The situation was characterized as a battle. “Let the loose-cannon fire begin! We Made Waves” proclaimed a poster on the *Star-Bulletin*’s newsroom wall by webmaster Blaine Fergerstrom. It also became a suggestion for a T-shirt. He initiated several other slogans that characterized the newsroom’s loose atmosphere during those stressful days. He described how a joke email message from his sister became a newsroom rant one day:

Immediately after Rupert came in town and said we were dead ducks and to go back to work, we’re sitting in the offices and it’s gloomy and dark, and it’s near deadline. And I get this email from my sister, and there’s an audio file attached to it. No explanation. It’s a phone call. You hear the phone ringing and someone picks up. A man with a voice that sounds like a Pakistani says, “Is Apga there? Your daughter – she come on my property today and she kick my dog!” The profanities start, and it goes on. I’m sitting listening with my headphones on, and I start laughing out loud. I grab Ken Andrade. He gets real offended and then he starts cracking up. At one point this Pakistani guy screams, “Why you kick my

dog?!” It’s 15 minutes before deadline, and I put it out over the speakers. And soon the entire newsroom could hear this “why you kick my dog?!” rant. So, why you kick my dog sort of became our rallying cry in the newsroom. We made T-shirts and posters. It was directed against Gannett. I had foot-high letters above my desk.⁴³

Fergerstrom made his reputation by launching starbulletin.com on March 18, 1996, after just a couple of weeks of preparation. He was a self-motivated, free-wheeling individual, well suited to the *Star-Bulletin* newsroom of the late 1990s. He left the *Star-Bulletin* and took a job with Kamehameha Schools. One of his reactions to the shutdown crisis was to put a Web cam in the newsroom so the public could see what was happening.

We had nothing to lose. What are they going to do, fire you? We were cracking up about what the British comedy troupe Monty Python said in one of their movies: “We’re not dead yet.” It fit so perfectly.

In between the humor and the fear was the knowledge that people in the community cared even if they didn’t know all the details. Citizens may not have been aware that Gannett had been running a monopoly on the business side for years through the JOA and was protected from antitrust and price-fixing laws. Rees comments that the

⁴³ Telephone conversation with Blaine Fergerstrom, July 14, 2004.

JOA became “an incentive not to invest in good reporting” (Rees 1999: 8). Indeed, Gannett was already making plenty of money in Honolulu. The HNA returns, Rees claimed, were close to an “unconscionable 50 percent, and has been sending \$50 million plus a year off the Islands to Gannett coffers in Arlington, Virginia.”⁴⁴ Some people who worked for the dailies put Gannett’s profit margin at 30 percent of revenues. The *Star-Bulletin’s* circulation was around 65,000, so some prospective owners expressed interest in buying it.

Star-Bulletin staff anxiously waited. Even an *Advertiser* headline seemed to sympathize: “Lifelines tentative, newsroom endures.”⁴⁵ The article reads:

A ‘Yes . . . We Are Open’ sign still hangs at the entrance to the Honolulu *Star-Bulletin* newsroom. The sign has become an emblem of the afternoon paper’s survival and a badge of honor for the staff seven months after publishing its own obituary. But behind the sign, uncertainty and wariness hang over the newsroom.⁴⁶

In the article, long-time editorial assistant Trini Peltier, who worked at the *Star-Bulletin* since the 1950s, is featured. Like her colleagues, she felt like a funeral was imminent. She did not have much faith in the survival of the paper. Those interviewed for this study expressed similar sentiments — a sense of doom. When the *Star-Bulletin* was

⁴⁴ Rees, *ibid.*, p. 7.

⁴⁵ Tanya Bricking, “Lifelines tentative, newsroom endures,” *the Advertiser*, May 16, 2000, p. A1 & p. A6.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

finally put up for sale in April 2000, Gannett was slow to provide useful financial information for prospective buyers.

Editor Frank Bridgewater recalls those incredible 18 months, when he and others were working 15-hour days. He was doubling as managing editor and city editor — two key positions that are demanding on their own:

When Dave stepped down and I became acting managing editor, they had no city editor at the time, so I sat out on the city desk and ran the city desk, along with others. It was kind of like being acting managing editor but also acting city editor at the same time. I remember that last year, I said I would never do it again, but it was one of those times that you do things that you'd never expect you would do again. That year I worked every single holiday. I was just trying to get people motivated enough to get the paper out. It was hard to hire; our applications dropped way down. You can't blame them; nobody wanted to get into such an uncertain situation. So, we kind of kept doing more with less as people would leave; either replace them, or in some cases we had to fill in a different way, move people around and do different things. So, that was a tough time just to get the paper out every day.⁴⁷

In comes Black, an unassuming man willing to settle for a 10 percent profit — much less than Gannett would have wanted. After Black struck a deal to buy the paper, a feature ran on the front of the Insight Section by Capitol reporter Richard Borreca titled:

⁴⁷ Interview with Frank Bridgewater, Nov. 18, 2003.

“History in headlines: The *Star-Bulletin* story is one of grit and independence.”⁴⁸ Black was seen as a savior, albeit an unlikely savior because he was a Canadian who owned privately about 80 newspapers in Canada and Washington state, most of them free shoppers similar to *MidWeek*, though much smaller. Only one of the newspapers was a daily. He was running Black Press from a spare bedroom of his home in Victoria, B.C.⁴⁹ The *Star-Bulletin* would be his biggest paper. His battle with Gannett over circulation lists, newsprint and other aspects of the deal created a “David versus Goliath” picture in the press. *Star-Bulletin* cartoonist Corky Trinidad ran a cartoon in an announcement by O’ahu Publications, which Black formed as the new local company, with Black showing a knife-wielding Gannett holding and threatening a little David holding a slingshot. Other headlines set up the competition as a newspaper war. “Showdown in Paradise,” said a headline for a story in *Brill’s Content*.⁵⁰ A headline for Fleeson’s story in *American Journalism Review* read, “The Pulse of Paradise: After a new owner rescues it from a near-death experience, Honolulu’s aggressive Star-Bulletin gears up for a battle against Gannett’s dominant Advertiser.” Clearly, those in the trade press resented Gannett and its abuse of its power. The case had broken legal ground nationally and surprised consultants and media critics because in the past, the courts kept their hands off JOAs. What was different about Honolulu? Were its citizens more aggressive? Many would laugh at that thought, because the mainland image of Hawai‘i was a quiet island paradise with smiling

⁴⁸ Richard Borreca, “History in headlines: The *Star-Bulletin* story is one of grit and independence,” *the Star-Bulletin* Insight Section, Saturday, Nov. 11, 2000, B1.

⁴⁹ Don Chapman, “A Tale of Two Newspapers,” *MidWeek*, December 6, 2000, p. 5 & 48.

⁵⁰ Seth Mnookin, Showdown in Paradise,” *Brill’s Content*, June 2001, pp. 84-87

people. It was the local-mainland dialectic that bubbled over, and, coupled with strong Democratic Party and union connections, gained momentum.

One staff member echoed others' sentiments when she said Gannett made a costly mistake:

How dare someone try to shut us down and be so arrogant! Gannett...How dare they try to shut us down without going through the paces, even if it's pro forma. They didn't even put us on the block. They were required to at least make an attempt to put us up for sale. If no one wanted to buy us, then they could legally shut us down. But they decided not to go that route. Their thinking was, no one wants an afternoon paper. The economy sucks in Hawai'i, let alone on the mainland. So Rupert and Gannett made the unilateral decision to announce the shutdown. That was basically their mistake.

Before the paper actually changed hands Black battled hard. Black brought out manager Don Kendall from B.C., whom some called a "street fighter," to deal with Gannett. The Hawai'i Newspaper Agency, which had dismantled *Star-Bulletin* racks right after the closure was announced, still had not replaced all of them four months later after the closure was put on hold. Save Our *Star-Bulletin* had made spot checks on racks at 44 locations, and said only eight had been returned. At least 150 racks had been hauled away

after the JOA was supposed to end on Oct. 30, 1999.⁵¹ In the end, Liberty got a \$26.5 million payoff anyway.

Black brought in a recruiter, Bob Poole, to interview staff and prepare for the changeover. Black went around town and got advertisers to commit, and promised a morning edition and a Sunday paper.⁵² The last day the *Star-Bulletin* published in the “old, green building” was March 14, 2001. The newspaper that day said “Mahalo for your support! New Star-Bulletin will make its debut tomorrow morning.”⁵³ A letter to readers put the battle in terms its readers could relate to:

Not too long ago, some people thought the odds of the Star-Bulletin surviving were about equal to those of the Rainbow Warriors making it to the NCAA Basketball tournament — not great. But now, backed by new owner David Black, infused with additional talent and cheered on by a generous community, the Star-Bulletin is pumped. The uncertainty is gone.⁵⁴

A large photo of everyone in the newsroom filled Page 1. And an ad in *MidWeek* showed a picture of the paper with a headline: “ISLAND CRAZE! Thousands Switching to The Sunday Star-Bulletin!” The next day’s paper showed the staff parading down South Street to the new headquarters. They were not allowed to take anything but

⁵¹ Susan Kreifels, “Group says HNA failed to replace Star-Bulletin racks,” *Star-Bulletin*, Friday, January 28, 2000, A5.

⁵² Russ Lynch, “*Star-Bulletin*’s new owner touts major inroads in market,” *Star-Bulletin*, Tuesday, February 27, 2001, B1.

⁵³ Treena Shapiro, “Mahalo for your support! New *Star-Bulletin* will make its debut tomorrow morning,” *the Star-Bulletin*, Wednesday, March 14, 2001, A1.

⁵⁴ Frank Bridgewater, “Letter to our readers,” *Star-Bulletin*, Wednesday, March 14, 2001, A1.

personal items out of the newsroom — security guards had been posted for more than a year. Lind called them “a small army of special rent-a-cops. At first we were told they were assigned to keep other media out of the building, but it quickly became clear that they are here to watch us and keep us from stealing moveable objects.”⁵⁵ Peltier decided not to join the new publication because so many of the oldtimers and her friends were gone. It was the end of an era in the life of the *Star-Bulletin*. She emotionally recalled that last day. Her sons came, and one was driving a U-Haul truck for his new business:

He said, mom this is your last day; I'll come visit you. So he comes into the parking lot on the last day and we're going to have this big walk, and my son got this U-Haul in the parking lot, and the big joke at the newspaper was I had six big filing cabinets, four drawers each. Five cabinets were for my personal stuff, and the last had two drawers for my stuff, and two were for the company. The joke was, hey, how are you going to get this stuff out of here? I said, I've got my son's U-Haul out there to take my stuff home. I had shoes, jackets there. I had cans of cookies, teapots. I had been there 45 years. I had schoolbooks and papers and all my kid's stuff, because my kids would come in and I'd say, “Go to the conference room and do your homework.” I had files from Riley Allen.

On that last day when we were moving, and everyone was downstairs ready to walk down, they said, Peltier, you're the oldest employee. I went to each department, I went to each computer, to make sure that they had nothing. All the

⁵⁵ Lind, *ibid.* Oct. 13, 1999.

Star-Bulletin files had been purged. It was the most heart-breaking thing. I had my two sons with me. I walked out the door and said, “This is it.” I turned around and had tears in my eyes. Wow, my whole life was spent here. I walked down the steps with my sons in the back of me, and there were all these news people out front, and my two sons walked back up and went out the back door. They said, mom, we can’t do this. This is you. So I walked out the door, and I was the last employee out of the building. They were in the front waiting. John Simonds was there. He was with the *Advertiser* already, but he was basically a *Star-Bulletin* man. All my buddies were there; and Bud Smyser took my hand. He and I walked down. I didn’t want to walk down, but I owed it to my co-workers. I owed it to them to do the last walk. I felt like dead man walking, yeah? When I got down there (to the new *Star-Bulletin* newsroom) I didn’t walk into the door; I didn’t go in. I just stayed outside.

A new newspaper was created on March 15 — or was it? Black created a new business, an independently owned newspaper — something extremely rare in the world of newspaper-chain dominance because of the huge start-up costs and barriers to entry. In a brilliant move, he purchased RFD Publications, publisher of *MidWeek*, and its presses, which also printed some military publications and printed other *Penny Press* and *Pacific Business News* on contract, and formed a new company: O’ahu Publications.

Circulation was down to about 63,500 on March 15. But Black was hopeful. The economy in Hawai‘i and on the mainland was in an upswing. The press had better reproduction for photos than the *Advertiser’s* press, but it was slower and not designed to produce a daily newspaper. And, there were difficult delivery and press problems in the beginning, and the paper lost subscribers who had to wait up to four days for their first new *Star-Bulletin*.⁵⁶ This was going to be tough newspaper battle. Gannett had not given up all the keys to apartment buildings where the *Star-Bulletin* would need to be delivered. *Star-Bulletin* racks had been positioned on city streets, and delivery and sales staff had been hired away to work for the *Advertiser*. There were reportedly *Advertiser* “spies” parked on the street outside the *MidWeek* presses, watching how things were going. The *Advertiser* began giving away and heavily discounting newspapers to increase its circulation. And, the *Advertiser* started an afternoon edition. It had claimed earlier that an afternoon paper would not be profitable. The *Star-Bulletin* began a morning edition too, as well as one on Sundays, which it hadn’t had in years. For the first time since 1961, there was real business competition among daily newspapers in Hawai‘i.

“Bulletin survives, now must thrive,” was another headline a day after the sale to Black was announced. Survival had been the instinct among staff at the time of the crisis. Now they knew they would have to fight. But, the rules were different for reporters. In a highly competitive business environment, advertising dollars are key. Any criticism of large advertisers, such as grocery stores and other big retailers, is not acceptable,

⁵⁶ Debbie Sokei, “Press problems, delivery woes plague new Bulletin,” *Pacific Business News*, Vol 39, No.

especially for the underdog newspaper. Black made his rounds about town to secure advertising, and had been “getting an earful about things like What Price Paradise, and the car stuff,” one editor said.

Initially, staff had been added to replace all those who had left in the uncertainty. Later, staff agreed to a pay cut to avoid layoffs. It was a hard time everywhere after the Sept. 11 attacks — the worst time to start up a newspaper business. “Battered Hawaii Underdog Remains Afloat,” said a headline in *Editor & Publisher*.⁵⁷ Across the country, newspapers were hurting, even though their journalistic mission was revived after Sept. 11 because of the public’s rekindled interest in news. The *Advertiser* made enhancements with new sections, and a front page that featured a red hibiscus — once used by the *Star-Bulletin*. The *Advertiser* published an editorial on how it was the “local” paper. The intense competition was further colonizing the papers and Hawai‘i, as forces outside the state directed pricing and policy.

Black fought back by bringing in new owners, such as Torstar Corp., owner of *The Toronto Star* and local investors. A little over a year after he purchased the paper, he sold a minority stake to a prominent and well-connected group of businessmen and lawyers. They were Duane Kurisu, who had sports and other publishing and radio interests; Franklin Tokioka, a Stanford business school graduate who was chairman of Island Holdings Inc.; Colbert Matsumoto, president of Island Holdings, who had been

2, March 23, 2001.

⁵⁷ Lucia Moses, “Battered Hawaii Underdog Remains Afloat: Economy Hits ‘Star-Bulletin’ Hard,” *Editor & Publisher*, November 26, 2001, editorandpublisher.com.

appointed by the court to review the Kamehameha Schools Bishop Estate trustees; Jeffrey Watanabe, a director of many companies and former deputy attorney general; and Warren Luke, a Harvard business school graduate who was chairman and chief executive officer of Hawai'i National Bank. They became directors of O'ahu Publications Inc. and MidWeek Printing Inc. Bringing them on board gave Black local credibility and most likely extended the life of the *Star-Bulletin*. A press release said that Black's vision, even while he was negotiating to buy the paper, was to be "a steward for the paper and to bring in Hawai'i shareholders."⁵⁸ It may have only been for symbolic reasons because it was not revealed how much they actually invested, and their future commitments remain to be seen.

Most of the newsroom staff members were still there in 2004, although about one-third had left since the closure announcement was made. Ironically, three people prominently shown in *Star-Bulletin* pictures carrying banners during the walk down South Street on March 14, 2001, have since left for the *Advertiser* — Treena Shapiro, Gordon Pang and Steven Petranik. At least some people left because of the *Star-Bulletin's* uncertain future, particularly because Gannett built a state-of-the-art printing plant in Kapolei. The *Advertiser* started printing colorful, high-quality papers in the summer of 2004, negating the *Star-Bulletin's* advantage in picture and color reproduction and threatening to steal contract printing work that subsidized the *Star-Bulletin*. But Black says he's in it for the long term and doesn't need a huge profit margin to survive.

⁵⁸ "Hawaii Investors Buy into Star-Bulletin and MidWeek," News Release from O'ahu Publications, April

He's even willing to lose money on the *Star-Bulletin* for a long time while *Mid-Week* supports both papers. How long he can wait is the big question. One staff member expressed his worries about the paper's future:

If anything ever happened to David Black the paper would fold the next day. It's on his good health that we can work. Can you imagine how much poorer a community we would be without two papers? It's not like on the Mainland where there is competition from papers who can go into another market. The *L.A. Times* might dominate, but there are other papers around that have bureaus covering stuff. The political establishment was acutely aware of that. And that's why both Cayetano and Linda Lingle, when she was head of the Republican Party at that time, knew that if you only had one paper in town, that paper would, either actively or by omission, dictate the politics of the state.

Competition has grown more intense, in both editorial and advertising, as they grow more tightly linked. The *Advertiser* spent at least \$200,000 to get the University of Hawai'i's athletics marketing contract. A staff member explained how that kind of business deal with a newspaper can hurt the public's access to information.

From the news point of view if you are in journalism it sets a bad precedent. It raises issues. I don't know if anyone in the general reading community sees it.

When they are spending all that money on the athletics department, it makes you

wonder about the kind of access they are going to have — the breaks they're going to get on the stories. It's unfortunate. We already know that when the UH announces seasons tickets going on sale for all their major sports that they got a quarter-page or half-page ad in the *Advertiser* to announce it — when and where and how to buy them, prices and so on — we don't have that ad, we'll have to respond with a news story or something just to let our readers know, but it doesn't have the impact of the half-page ad. Then the *Advertiser* gets their signs all over the arena. With all that money you get away with what you can.

That's just another example of things we're up against. They've got a 50 percent bigger staff, they've got more newshole (space for news) and more money to spend on all the people. We're outgunned in just about every aspect.

Editor Frank Bridgewater explained that there isn't enough money anymore to do enterprise reporting because the paper has to spend 90 percent of its resources just getting the daily paper out, including Sunday, which leaves only 10 percent to spend on investigative and enterprise reporting — the stories that can topple corrupt officials and help the voiceless, the kind of the stories that the *Star-Bulletin* of the 1990s prided itself on.⁵⁹ Competition for staff continues between the two papers as well. Dennis Francis, a “big gun” in charge of advertising and circulation at the *Advertiser*, was lured away to the *Star-Bulletin*. One of his first moves as the new publisher was to cut all delivery to the

⁵⁹ Interview with Frank Bridgewater, Nov. 18, 2003.

neighbor islands effective Aug. 1, 2004 after it had been restored a decade earlier. *Star-Bulletin* bureaus on Maui, Kauai and in Kona, Hawai‘i, however, would be maintained.⁶⁰

Change as a Manifestation of Culture

Journalists at the *Star-Bulletin* had been living with the contradictions between their professional values and the pressures from the business side of the newspaper since the Gannett era began in the early 1970s. These pressures and change were themes in all the interviews, which reflected the changing culture of newsrooms in America during the past 30-plus years. Industry changes were the driving force, but the situation in Honolulu was unique in the United States, which magnified the feelings of uncertainty, loss of control and cynicism that staff members expressed at the *Star-Bulletin* after it was sold to Black. It was unique because of organized resistance by SOS after threats by large outsider interests and because of the JOA structure that had given reporters an unusual amount of freedom to report without worrying about the bottom line. A staff member commented:

I don't think it is the same *Star-Bulletin* at all. That's probably two different things. One is the new owner and the new cost controls that are in place, and secondly, journalism is changing. At least middle-of-the-road American journalism is not the same animal that it was when I got into the profession in '71.

⁶⁰ Clynton Namuo, *Pacific Business News*, "Star-Bulletin eliminates neighbor island delivery," July 16,

Size makes a difference too. The bottom line is much more apparent on the smaller papers:

We were in a unique situation down the street, and now the same kind of pressures that applied everywhere apply here. Of course, when you are on a large paper, you can do things that on a smaller paper you couldn't. ... On a smaller paper your link to major advertisers is more direct, or a bit more intimate, so perhaps you couldn't do the same kinds of things you could do on, say, *The Wall Street Journal*.

Another reporter echoed these comments:

The New York Times does not worry about overtime. We do. *The New York Times* does not have pressures on who they can hire. The *Star-Bulletin* does, and from what I've heard, so does Gannett. Gannett is definitely the model for cost-based journalism. It's the we-don't-have-the-money-for-it type of theory. How much is this story going to cost? Can we afford it?

Richard Borreca noted that during the 1980s, Gannett switched from lavish coverage of the Democratic convention in 1980 to a slimmed-down pressroom four years later:

In '80, it was expenses be damned for all stories for the convention. They were going to cover it with as many reporters as they could. They had an entire room set up just for the TV screens, and they had that staffed all the time. It was a massive operation. And by the time we went to Houston, the Gannett pressroom was a couple of card tables and maybe 10 people. I think the idea of cost-cutting was definitely in the mind of Gannett, and if it's in the mind of Gannett, obviously it's going to be in the mind of smaller papers.⁶¹

In earlier eras, newspapers of course had to worry about survival, and that meant they had to make money. They are, after all, businesses. But, from the journalists' point of view, the issue is how much money owners want to make versus how much should be spent to provide strong community coverage. Journalists say these are out of balance, and this has caused a group that's cynical by nature to become even more cynical and frustrated. The changes could be signaling the end of the Fourth Estate for newspapers if they fail to live up to their responsibilities. For the *Star-Bulletin* staff interviewed, journalism is a calling. It's a chance to make a difference in their communities. One staff member's comment illustrates common frustrations in a newsroom culture that ostensibly has a mission to serve the community, not advertisers.

It's not to say that the guys who were here before had the best ideas, or that they didn't care about profit, because they did. But they had more of a sense of what

⁶¹ Interview with Richard Borreca, Oct. 16, 2003.

the tradeoff was to make 3 percent more, and how it affects our community. How much is that 3 percent worth in terms of your effect on how you cover your community? What does an extra \$5 a week cost in terms of the effect? Spending that 3 percent to have a team of reporters who do stories on issues and problems that people really need to know about and care about. We need to make them care about them. They don't really know the impact of certain things. We need to make them evident, because we need to do something good for the community. As long as our community thrives, the newspaper thrives.

Several reporters said they engaged in self-censorship, something that is common across America:

I know what kinds of stories I would have trouble getting into the paper, and so some of this is self-editing. Why bother to pursue something when I know that there's not a very good likelihood that it's going to get into the paper?

Like many journalists, this one opposes self-censorship:

I'm repulsed by it, but it's just a fact of life. What can you do? I can scream and yell and quit, but what is that going to accomplish? I think I can do much more good by doing what I'm doing.

But another staff member offers a different view — that story selection is about news judgment rather than censorship:

With some (stories) there is no reason to do it. In some ways you have to go out of your way to do some of those because it's not a regular beat. Say, cars. If you want to go out and find something you could find something every week. Look at the lemon law or complaints to consumer affairs. It has to be really big. If there was an investigation, then obviously we have to do it. If there's a state investigation in rolling back odometers, it's fair game. You have to do the things that are legitimate news stories.

But one thing is clear — most newspapers, and the *Star-Bulletin* is no exception, don't print the details of births, weddings, deaths, divorces, bankruptcies, court coverage and listings of rulings and indictments the way they used to. The *Star-Bulletin* isn't a paper of record any more. Two staff members noted how much the content of the newspaper has changed:

I was under the impression that we carried everybody's death in Hawai'i, but I was corrected on that by a top editor. We don't carry all the deaths, and apparently don't consider it an obligation.

Another commented:

Newspapers don't have the luxury of saying, you're a reporter, go dig up some stories. Now it's all about money. It's across America.

The cynicism pervades America's newsrooms, but many stay in the business because of the calling. Lyle Nelson, a longtime staff reporter, called it "psychic income."

In the news business, you walk in the door, and I'm trying to call the governor on one phone and the mayor on the other. That's the way you might start the day. Or the dead body beat (obituaries).

It's not the pay; it's the psychic income. You're going out to meet Bob Hope or the president of the United States. I came to work Sunday morning once and got home Monday morning. Or, I might have three big stories at once and work all night.

But that's increasingly changing. Another longtime *Star-Bulletin* staff member comments the culture of the newsroom compared with the newsroom of 30 years ago:

There's no excitement. There's no, "We beat the *Advertiser*!" Some people have that feeling, but generally there's no real mission kind of feeling. To me, journalism is a calling. Why do this; why put up with this? It's a tough job. Your name is on that story every day. You have to really want to do this. Now, not so much so. Now it's just a job. I think it has a lot to do with the corporate structure.

The journalists were nostalgic about the old days because time allows individuals to reconstruct the past as a simpler, more pleasant time when they may have been more idealistic because they were younger. Journalism is a service-oriented profession that almost has a religious identity that pervades the culture, but it is structured as a profit-making business. Critics fear that economics becomes a problem “because its force can crush the spirit of journalists who come to their work with much more than profit in mind,” says Schudson (2003: 123). The extent to which these two come into conflict varies according to the leadership, management and resources of each organization, but they do affect the culture of the newsroom. “Sometimes journalism still wins, not because virtue trumps greed, but because journalists build the newsroom culture and the newsroom relations on which the entire organization depends” (Schudson: 123). These relations and other aspects of the *Star-Bulletin’s* culture and identity are examined in the next chapters, which show how leadership, management, local values, routines and organization structure as expressed in the interviewees’ narratives create distinctive aspects of the paper’s culture and identity.

CHAPTER 4
LEADERSHIP AND NEWSROOM MANAGEMENT AT THE *STAR-BULLETIN*: A
CULTURAL APPROACH

Leadership plays a critical role in shaping organizational culture. Cultural approaches to leadership theory (Trice and Beyer 1993; Schein 1992) focus on ways in which leaders influence culture as well as how employees perceive and respond to leaders' values and actions. Ways in which leaders communicate culture can have symbolic meaning for staff and motivate a response or consequence on the part of the employees. These culture-creating values and activities of the leaders and the employees can be unstable — they change with different leaders, ownership and circumstances. Manifestations of organizational culture at the *Star-Bulletin* appear as perceptions about leaders and their actions in the narratives of the interviews that are discussed next. First, it is important to understand that in this analysis, the focus is on people with leadership qualities. All managers are not necessarily leaders, and leaders are not necessarily managers. Leaders are those who had influence in running the newsroom as perceived by the interviewees, and the most influential leaders may not have been near the top of a formal hierarchy.

At different times in the *Star-Bulletin's* history, formal power over the newsroom has fallen to the editor or the managing editor and sometimes the publisher. Others functioned as symbolic leaders because they represented for the employees the attributes and characteristics most valued by the staff or because they were close to those with

formal power. The leaders who are covered here go back as far as Riley Allen because none of the participants predates his tenure.

The formal leaders at the *Star-Bulletin* can be classified into three types, according to Trini Peltier. She was the administrative assistant to every editor and managing editor since she arrived in 1955 when Riley Allen was editor until 2001 when she left and Frank Bridgewater went from acting managing editor to managing editor. Peltier says Allen and A.A. “Bud” Smyser were from the “old” school of editors; Hobert Duncan represented an era of change in ownership and the design of newspapers, and John Simonds and David Shapiro were the new type of editor at a time when the business of journalism and the growth of chains came to dominate the news industry in America.⁶² Interviewees shared their reflections on these individuals as well as others who had some influence at different times in the life of the *Star-Bulletin*.

Riley Allen: A Crusading Newspaper and a Family Culture

Riley Allen helped to create a “crusading” newspaper because of his support for statehood and other causes, and he was also known for the family-like atmosphere he created. He was well connected with the community, and was known among staff for supporting equality among different ethnic groups. Allen was important because of his long tenure and experience with important events in the life of the paper: the paper’s

⁶² All were editors-in-chief except Duncan, who was managing editor and later assistant publisher, and Shapiro was managing editor.

decades-long campaign for statehood, its coverage of the attacks on Dec. 7, 1941, the Massie case and other momentous events.

Shapiro and Richard Borreca didn't know Allen personally, but heard stories about him. Shapiro recollected:

From what I know he kept a very professional and ethical operation going. That period was very highly charged as regarding the ownership — it was political. I think the crusading (by the *Star-Bulletin*) developed during that period as a result of the owner's political activities.⁶³

Borreca, who has written a short history of the paper, commented:

From what everyone tells me, he was really plugged into the local community. Riley Allen would go to two events at lunch and three at dinner every night. If it was a banquet, Riley Allen was at it. He knew what was going on. He literally kept three secretaries working.⁶⁴

Lyle Nelson, who worked with Allen, recalls:

All of us heard Riley's stories. He was a whirling dervish.

⁶³ Interview with David Shapiro, Nov. 14, 2001.

Riley Allen was a guy who always wanted to get as many names in the paper as he could. He wanted to give the Filipino a boost.⁶⁵

An editor who didn't know Allen personally was well aware of his contribution to the paper. She refers to a previous era when being local meant you were part of an underclass of people. She reflected on that era, which represented "the good old days of journalism:"

You hear so much about the Riley Allen era. *If it was as good as they say it was, it must have been fun to work then. To have had such newsroom integrity then and not use inflammatory words like "Japs" during the war and to make sure that all citizens of Hawai'i got their due; to keep a vigilant eye on civil rights. To champion that and not just the money interests; during the war and going on through statehood to make sure we weren't second-class citizens in the nation. This plays into being local — being champions for the little guy. That's the basis of what makes you local. There are these whole populations of people who aren't getting their due. Instead of just going with the program, the people in charge in the newsroom are very mindful of this shared journalism history. That tradition has continued.*

⁶⁴ Interview with Richard Borreca, Oct. 16, 2003.

⁶⁵ Interview with Lyle Nelson, Feb. 2, 2004.

Allen was involved hands-on in the newsroom, and in that way was able to pass on his vision and style to other employees, as one longtime reporter remembers Allen's later years:

He was a funny, intense little man. He'd come down, stand at the teletype, look at the news and talk to Bud. He had a great interest in the paper.

Trini Peltier gives her insight into Allen's character and the tone he set for the newsroom. She describes below how she was hired, his kindhearted nature and the way in which he took care of everyone in the newsroom. In her story, she had just finished business school and was sent down the street to the *Star-Bulletin* to check on a job opening:⁶⁶

I walk into the office and there are three secretaries there, and I said, "I'm here to see the editor about a possible job." I had a seat, and the door opens, and this intimidating little man comes out — he looks like a gnome. I tell him who I am. I go into the office. He hands me a pen and a notebook. He said, "Do you take dictation?" And I said, yes. So he started dictating. It was an editorial. He dictates for about five minutes, which is long. I go outside and he says, "Transcribe that." It was all manual typewriters. I transcribed it. I finished a half hour later. I go in the office with all these sheets of paper with typing on it. I go to Mr. Allen, and he says, "Call me Riley." I couldn't call anybody by their first name who was older than me. I was 20 years old. He looked at it and made corrections. A copy boy

⁶⁶Interview with Trini Peltier, July 22, 2003.

comes up from next door and takes this copy somewhere, and that afternoon the editor came out and I started working from that moment on. I said, "I can't start working today because I graduate from school tonight." He said, "You start on Monday." He asked me how much I wanted to get paid, and I said, \$150 a month, which 47 years ago was big money. I got paid \$37.50 a week.

Riley Allen typed with two fingers. They didn't teach us that way in business college. It was fast. Strikeovers — that's a no-no in business college. But Riley did a backspace and type over. Well, if that's how all editors type, that's fine. It would have to be edited and typeset by hand. Everything was backwards.

Riley knew every employee at the newspaper. He was a father image. He took care of everybody, from the janitor up. The *Star-Bulletin* at that time, we had the newsroom, the pressroom, the classified — we were all in one building on Merchant Street. I think we moved in '60 or '61. Before that Riley took care of everybody. He could remember birthdays, who had children; if you were sick, don't come to work. We didn't have status forms at that time. You could be gone for two months and your paycheck kept coming. He was kindhearted and benevolent. You'd walk down the street, and if you passed five people, five people would know Riley Allen. Homeless people would come into our office and he'd never give them money, because they'd go out and buy alcohol, but he gave

them chits – to go out and order from the finest restaurants in town. All these homeless people — he took care of all of them.

Something would happen, he'd put, News Story. He'd spell lead, lede. That's not how they spelled it in business college. I had to learn this whole new lingo. It was amazing. Everybody in the community knew who Riley was. He went to three or four luncheons a day. He went to every function. He was an honorary member of every club. The Chinese Chamber of Commerce, Japanese Chamber of Commerce, Filipinos . . . and the newspaper, when we wrote news stories, we wrote with the understanding that we wrote for the Kalihi housewife. If there was a news story that was so technical, we were told to rewrite it and pretend it's for the Kalihi housewife, which means the lady who stays home and takes care of her house and her children and family. Most of the affluent people lived in Kahala, Waialae and Waikiki, but we didn't worry about them. Riley Allen used to give me a story and tell me to ask the reporter to rewrite this for the Kalihi housewife.

I took care of Riley's Christmas list – 3,500 people — I knew that list by heart.

Our newspaper was surrounded by these big shots. We were some little building, and in front of our building was this intimidating Amfac Building, and in the back of us was C. Brewer. You had the Damon Transportation Building, you had Theo

H. Davies. We were in the middle. Alexander & Baldwin and the Big Five — they were all around. Riley broke bread with all of them. The businessmen came to the office. Riley had an open-door policy. Everybody got to see him. He didn't care who they were. You just went in, and he just took care of us. He had Christmas functions for us. Anybody who had a baby, he'd say, "Go to Bank of Hawai'i and get a Savings Bond for so-and-so."

That was my first introduction to an editor — Riley Allen. He was unique. Nobody can be like him. There was only one Riley Allen. I always remembered what he said. You're only going to be here once, so what good you can do, do it now, because you only have one chance. I did everything I could to take care of people I worked with. When I went to work, I made sure my co-workers were taken care of. It was a big joke at the office. You need anything, you ask Trini, and she'll take care of it.

Peltier became an informal leader in the newsroom because of her long tenure and relationship with the key editors who oversaw the newsroom. She had a survivor's instinct, and kept out of newsroom politics, as she indicates here:

A lot of things I didn't ask. Then, if they ask you, you really don't know. Just take care of your house and don't worry about what goes outside. I did that at the

newspaper. But everything that happened in the newsroom had to pass through my desk. I had a good rapport with the bosses.

Although she was not in a formal leadership role, she passed on Allen's kindhearted style and concern for employees, which served as a bridge with the past and gave the employees some sense of stability during the subsequent decades when changing ownership and economic conditions remade the *Star-Bulletin* and every newsroom in America. New and old staff members would go to her to learn about the newsroom, hear some stories about the past, or get help with administrative tasks. One long-time editor who joined the paper in the 1980s said:

Trini was a great egalitarian. She didn't defer to anyone and she didn't look down at anyone either. She was casual, friendly and generous and always had time to chat or explain how things worked, or who was who. She was the foundation of the newsroom, and our connection to the paper's traditions and history.

Peltier was a symbol of many of the aspects of the old, family-like *Star-Bulletin* newsroom culture in many minds of the interviewees, particularly before 1980. Allen and the editors who followed represented additional aspects of the journalists and their paper: crusading, independent and gritty. These expressions of culture and identity, examined from Martin's differentiation perspective, can be seen in three dimensions:

- 1) The family-like culture. The newsroom physically was the place where staff members built their relationships and forged a community, thus creating culture;
- 2) The ideological culture of the journalists as expressed through their leadership;
- 3) The physical form of the newspaper in terms of the content of stories, photos and in its design. These were a reflection of the integration of journalistic ideology, workflow and management structure and leadership.

Ewing's All-Girl Newspaper and the "Paper of the Pacific"

Allen's retirement coincided with the arrival of new ownership as the new state of Hawai'i boomed economically. William H. "Bill" Ewing, who was managing editor under Allen, succeeded him as editor in 1960. The *Star-Bulletin* had the largest circulation in the state while the *Advertiser* was barely staying alive. Ewing set ethical standards, and would not allow reporters to accept gifts or free trips, according to his obituary, which also says he was "a Southern gent with an eye for news and an appreciation for life in the fast lane."⁶⁷ Ewing's actions had important cultural consequences for the newsroom because he liked women, staff said, and hired them. In the '50s the *Star-Bulletin* was sometimes called "Ewing's all-girl newspaper." Helen Altonn, who was hired in 1955, recalls:

The paper was heavily populated by women, which was unusual in those days. I had just come from California where trying to get a job was difficult if you were a

⁶⁷ Rod Ohira, "Bill Ewing, 'incisive' editor, dies, *Star-Bulletin*, July 2, 1997.

woman. I think it was because of the editor, Bill Ewing, who liked women, and also because they didn't have any feelings about women not being able to do the job. Even today (2003), the staff is predominantly women.⁶⁸

Nelson explained that Ewing was brought in from Washington D.C. "He came in for the Massie case and ended up in D.C. for us." Like Allen and Adam A. (Bud) Smyser, Ewing was perceived by employees as an old-school journalist who shared the Pacific vision of Allen, the Farringtons, Hobert Duncan and Jim Couey, who was publisher for a brief period before Chinn Ho sold the paper to Gannett in 1971. They wanted to make the *Star-Bulletin* the "voice of the Pacific" and "*The New York Times* of the Pacific." As Schein's leadership theory would indicate, leaders hire others like them.

But in the early 1960s, the change in ownership and management seemed to affect the family atmosphere that existed under Allen; the Hawai'i Newspaper Guild and other unions at the two papers went on strike in 1963 — the first strike among daily newspapers in Hawai'i — for higher wages and better working conditions. Chinn Ho took a hard line attitude, and the strike lasted 47 days — June 21 to Aug. 7. The atmosphere in the newsroom might have been dramatically changed except for the consistency of editor Smyser, who walked in Allen's footsteps. He served in various editorial leadership positions, beginning in the 1960s.

⁶⁸ Interview with Helen Altom, July 24, 2003.

“Bud” Smyser: Vision for Hawai‘i

Smyser joined the *Star-Bulletin* in 1946, retired in 1983 but continued to write his column until his death just before handover to Black in 2001. One former staff member remembers how Smyser was hired:

He went in to see Ray Coll (of the *Advertiser*); he was fresh off his Navy ship in the Spring of '46 and Ray Coll couldn't see him. It was a weekend or something, so he goes into see Riley Allen, and he's hired.

Smyser was a sacred cow among staff members, who said mostly positive things about him. Peltier relates her first impressions of him when he took over as editor, and how she later “took care” of some Communist Party members who threatened Smyser:

I go in to talk to him. And he types with two fingers, and he's exactly like Riley Allen...He was Bud Smyser's hero. Bud Smyser became a Riley Allen, and then my dedication was extended from Riley to Bud. I became protective of these men. Nobody had better hurt them. I remember when we had the Communist revolutionary party from the university or something when we were at the News Building. They made their way up to the second floor. Bud came out to see about the commotion, and one of the party members dressed up like Mao Tse-tung, shoved Bud up against the wall. I picked up that person and threw him outside. Nobody hurts Bud. It was like that all the time. I looked out for them, and they

looked out for me. I became like a mother image, even though I was younger than they were. I got to know them so well and their families. Bud was the same way. I can't believe the paper had two editors that were made out of the same fabric.⁶⁹

Like Allen, Smyser supported the rise of the new establishment and the decline of the oligarchy. He had similar concerns as expressed in Kent's (1993) analysis. Kent explains that the "Americanization" of Hawai'i would break the plantation oligarchy and ensure the rise to power of the liberal corporate establishment that represented business and labor interests and those of progressive politicians.⁷⁰ Smyser was an important force not just at the paper, but in Hawai'i too. In his later years, he was active on the governor's council on Hawai'i's economic future, seeking to chart the state's future. He served in a variety of positions, including editor and editorial page editor. He continued to write a column until his death on March 19, 2001, a few days after he fell and hit his head. His death was symbolic because it came within a few days of Black's takeover of the *Star-Bulletin*, and represented the passing of the old guard. Smyser took on a variety of causes, from no-fault insurance to dying with dignity. He wanted to protect Hawai'i from outside influence. He warned, in a report on Hawai'i's future, that unless caring people with vision intervene, "Control of Hawai'i will be lost to outsiders who may not have its long-term interests at heart," and that its natural beauty could be ruined (Smyser

⁶⁹Peltier interview.

⁷⁰ Kent (1993) cites the widely read histories of that time, such as Gavan Daws' *Shoal of Time* and Lawrence Fuchs' *Hawai'i Pono*.

1988: vi – viii). He also offered hope that Hawai‘i would be positioned to play a key role in the convergence of cultures. Smyser came to be well-respected in the newsroom and in the community. Shapiro commented:

He was an extremely high-minded guy. There was a lot to admire about him. He always used to tell me a newspaper should stand for something.⁷¹

A staff member explained that Smyser was seen as being evenhanded in covering community issues and, like Allen, kept strong links with the community:

There was a guy who understood ties between a newspaper and a community. He was accepting of different points of view and tried to incorporate that. Often he adjusted his thinking and opinions from what he heard from other people. He was the consummate community leader, more so than any politician. He was able to bring people together. He was predictable in some ways because of his background that led him a certain way, but he was not closed to ideas. He was a bit conservative for me, but that was a generational thing.

Other staff members also saw Smyser the same way. Like Allen, Smyser was a hero:

Bud was kind of an idealistic guy; a community figure. He believed in community leaders and saw great possibilities in people. That was a guy who was so intimately involved in the community; he was the consummate guy who

⁷¹ Interview with David Shapiro, Nov. 14, 2001.

understood that the newspaper was there to represent the people. The newspaper is the voice of the citizen. It's the only way the citizens know what's going on. Anything else is propaganda.

But one former staff member had a slightly different interpretation of where Bud stood on issues:

Smyser was always an upbeat guy, always a statehood guy, writing all these stories about statehood for years and years and years, but his opinions were always rather cloudy. He was always a guy hard to read on just where he stood on something. He had a few fights with (former Mayor) Frank Fasi, but everybody fought with Fasi, so that isn't necessarily political. Fasi was really a right-wing Democrat. You had trouble knowing where Bud really stood on things. But even in his editorial material, he was always pretty fair-minded and pointed out things here and there, but not necessarily political.

Smyser showed the strongest support for a few issues but seemed to keep the others in balance. Former Editor John Flanagan called him a "crusader." In an editorial after Smyser's death, he noted:

His biggest campaign ended successfully on March 12, 1959, the day the front page showed a huge U.S. flag with a 50th star and the headline 'STATEHOOD!'

. . . Always fighting for Hawai‘i, Bud Smyser’s spirit lives on at the Star-Bulletin.⁷²

Smyser was a hero to newsroom staff members because he stood for the journalistic ideals that they believed in — fairness and balance in journalism and advocating on behalf of Hawai‘i’s citizens, as several employees saw it:

I think definitely Bud was a hero. He was an icon; he was Mr. Star-Bulletin.

Everybody knew him, everybody respected him, everybody liked him. He knew so much about the paper. He loved that paper. Whenever you had a question, you went to him, or he would come in and say something profound or witty or funny.

If you had a role model for how you should be as a journalist, I think that Bud was pretty much it.

Bud was a great editor. He was a great newsman, even to his death.

Smyser was at the paper for 55 years as a reporter, city editor, managing editor, editor, and editorial page editor. He envisioned Hawai‘i as a bridge to Asia. Staff members all seemed to have heard about his trials with Fasi, who ran for mayor in 1970. Fasi banned Smyser and the *Star-Bulletin* from his news conferences:

⁷² John Flanagan. “Never say ‘30’ for Bud or the Star-Bulletin,” *Star-Bulletin*, Tuesday, March 20, 2001, p.

He and Fasi, I don't know what exactly set it off, but evidently he and Fasi were mortal enemies.

Shapiro remembers that time:

Around the time I started, Frank Fasi was running for mayor. The first time he won in 1968, Bud Smyser was the editor of the paper, and he thought it would be a bad idea if Frank Fasi got elected mayor. He went all out against him — hard-hitting stories, editorials ripping him. Fasi ended up campaigning against the *Star-Bulletin* over his opponents. There was a prevailing view that Bud went overboard.

I think some things were accidental, like in one case there was a Fasi ad, and on the page behind it there was a Republican Party ad in red ink, and the red ink bled through, so Fasi's ad said VOTE REPUBLICAN. I don't believe they did that on purpose.

But they sent a photographer to take a picture of a mess at Fasi's junkyard that was an eyesore. The photographer used a telephoto lens that compacted it, so it looked even worse than it was.

Fasi started to refuse to talk to the *Star-Bulletin* and ordered all his people not to talk to the *Star-Bulletin*, and it continued after he became mayor. And I think it

got national press. Newsweek did a piece. This was a big controversy.⁷³

After Fasi barred the *Star-Bulletin* from press conferences Smyser fought back. A judge forced Fasi to admit the press. Yet later, in 1988 after Smyser retired but still contributed to the paper, he and the *Star-Bulletin* decided to endorse Fasi.

Smyser had written a short history of the *Star-Bulletin* just before the handover to David Black, and had planned a documentary on Allen and a series on Hawai'i. Like Allen, Smyser got out of the newsroom a lot and attended many events, parties and meetings. He represented the progressive establishment interests of the time, which encouraged development of tourism and Hawai'i as a crossroads between East and West. He believed that stronger links with the outside would help Hawai'i. After Smyser retired he continued as contributing editor and John Simonds took over the editorial page.

Hobe Duncan and *Star-Bulletin* Design

Hobert Duncan represented an era of change at American newspapers. He brought his creative genius to the paper, and gave the paper a distinctive design. He served under Smyser and Couey, and also functioned as chief executive officer and vice president. Porter Dickenson was publisher until 1971 when Couey took over (Couey died just a few months later).⁷⁴ Couey was involved in news, and his influence on the newsroom was in

⁷³ Shapiro interview.

⁷⁴ L. Porter Dickenson succeeded Elizabeth Farrington as publisher in 1962 and was followed by Couey in 1971. Staff members said that Dickenson wasn't involved in the newsroom, and spoke little about him, so

splitting the management of the paper so that in 1971, Smyser, who was editor, became editorial page editor and Duncan was made executive editor in charge of the newsroom. One former editor indicates that the split took advantage of the two men's differences and talents:

Couey gave Hobert the main part of the paper, and Bud was the editorial page guy, a community relations leader — meeting people. It seemed at times as though they were running different newspapers, kind of the way some mainland papers, such as *The Wall Street Journal*, operate. They worked together a long time. They kind of understood their differences and didn't take them too seriously, but other people might have.

He commented on the shared conviction about the future of the paper:

It was a mission that many leaders of the paper shared, which was to promote the global hemispheric presence of the *Star-Bulletin* as something bigger than just a newspaper that covered the activities of O'ahu and the neighbor islands. And people had seen that potential, that there should be a kind of role. Hobe was very much interested in that. That's part of why he pursued his interest in China.

Employees interviewed were aware of Duncan's interest in China. He instituted a news style policy for stories about China long before other U.S. news organizations. China

he is not included in this study. See these *Star-Bulletin* stories for more: Helen Altonn, "Star-Bulletin long

would be called China, not the People's Republic of China, in news stories, and Taiwan was Taiwan, not the Republic of China. One former reporter remembers what Hobe said:

To hell with the People's Republic of China. From now on it's China and Taiwan. China's China. We were leading the nation.

He had also sent Arlene Lum, who later became publisher of the paper, to China to report right before President Nixon's visit. A *Star-Bulletin* article lauded her trip:

One of the rare American journalists to travel inside China after the 1949 revolution, she spends five weeks touring China in August and September, some months before President Nixon's 1972 visit. She is named an Overseas Press Club award winner on April 21, 1972.⁷⁵

But Duncan's biggest influence on the paper was in design, as one former staff member noted:

Hobe was a genius and really knew all facets of the business; knew layout, design – all of that, and better than many. He was also a good writer and had a lot of imagination, a great sense of humor; he had a real interest in photography, and was technically good. Hobe had a huge array of skills.

a leader in fighting for what's right," *Star-Bulletin* Final Edition, Sept. 16, 1999, A8; "Part of Hawaii for 118 years: a look at the Honolulu Star-Bulletin's history," *Star-Bulletin*, Nov. 10, 2000, A1.

⁷⁵ Ibid: "Part of Hawaii for 118 years," *Star-Bulletin*.

Another employee commented:

He was a real participant in the newsroom — make that headline bigger; make that picture this way.

A story about Fasi that Duncan put on Page 1 illustrates his influence on the paper at that time, and how it changed later. Shapiro had come over from the Big Island to cover the City Hall beat with Richard Borreca. They were doing some hard-hitting stories on Fasi's questionable fundraising practices:

Borreca and I had a piece once — Fasi had fire inspectors going out soliciting campaign contributions, the implication being: You make a campaign contribution or we do an inspection. So we did a story on this. And Hobe, jeez, his eyes lit up, and he tore up Page 1 and devoted the whole two-thirds of the top of Page 1 to this. I thought that element of the *Star-Bulletin* was lost under the Gialanella years; you know, I thought the *Star-Bulletin* wasn't a hard-hitting newspaper. It wasn't doing a lot of significant journalism.

Duncan had wanted to be publisher, and in 1975 Gannett made him assistant publisher. He later left the paper after Phil Gialanella, who was made president of the Hawai'i Newspaper Agency in 1974, was named publisher in 1975.⁷⁶ One staff member

⁷⁶ In 1971 John A. "Jack" Scott succeeded Couey as publisher after Couey died. He was publisher until Gialanella.

reflected on the changes that corporate ownership had on Duncan, who was navigating the paper through an era of change:

Duncan had been resisting assimilation into Gannett's corporate world, but he did good work for the *Star-Bulletin*. He won a big APME (Associated Press Managing Editors) national award in 1974 for some really tough work.

Couey — the man who endorsed Duncan — had died of a heart attack “on the runway in Rome”⁷⁷ about four years earlier before Chinn Ho could realize his vision of the *Star-Bulletin* as the *Times* of the Pacific; corporate interests ushered in a new era of chain ownership, as one former longtime staff member tells it:

If he hadn't died, I don't think we would have ever have been a Gannett paper. Chinn Ho appreciated and really liked Jim. They had these big plans. They bought the Guam paper (*Pacific Daily News*) and another one on the mainland. Jim Couey was going to make the *Star-Bulletin* THE Pacific paper. When Jim Couey died, all these plans were let go because Gannett bought us. I think Chinn Ho lost his dreams with the paper when Jim Couey died.

Under these circumstances, Duncan left for China a few years later, where he later died. The *Star-Bulletin* entered a new period under Gannett that was to last until the Liberty years in the 1990s. Peltier and others who were in management positions talked about

⁷⁷ This is according to one former staff member's recollection.

Gannett in positive terms because “they take care of you.” But Gannett, like other many other big media companies, had a reputation among journalists for focusing on profits first. Peltier reflected on the changing newsroom:

At the time I started at the newspapers, there were no super reporters. We were all equal, and everybody got treated equally. That’s why we coined that phrase, the *Star-Bulletin* family. Even the office people, we had an office newsletter called the *Star-Bulletin* family. Everything we did was *Star-Bulletin* family. This was during the Farrington, Chinn Ho era. Those huis, those groups, were made up of local people. When Gannett came over, it was a different story. We had to deal with mainland entities. They were different. Gannett thought about the bottom line. How much money can the paper bring in?⁷⁸

Gialanella — a bottom line-oriented Gannett manager brought out to run the business side of both the *Star-Bulletin* and *Advertiser* — had a big influence on the *Star-Bulletin* during a change in technology, as one former editor commented:

Phil was a very pivotal figure in the history of that newspaper. He drove a lot of decisions. He accomplished enormous goals that even the parent company was doubtful he could do. The conversion from cold type to automation — that was one of the many things he did. That in itself was an achievement. You take an organized (union) place like this and get printers to abandon the hot type,

⁷⁸ Peltier interview.

linotype, and get into cold type, then the next step was to go to the automated electronic processing — the front-end systems, the VDTs. The *Star-Bulletin* had VDTs in place and the newsroom automated before Rochester did, which was one of Phil's proudest accomplishments.

John Simonds and the Gannett Era

Gannett brought in its own managers in a somewhat secretive style that surprised some staff members. One of those new managers was John Simonds. Perhaps Simonds' biggest influence on the *Star-Bulletin* was the number and quality of employees he hired who transformed the newsroom. For example, the man who rose to be editor under Black, Frank Bridgewater, was hired by Simonds. Simonds was the first Gannett-assigned editor to have direct influence over the newsroom, and took over its management from Duncan. He had the title of managing editor — a position that had been vacant since Duncan had become executive editor, and it had continued to be vacant during the first four years of Gannett ownership, when Duncan ran the newsroom and Smyser was in charge of the editorial pages. Simonds first came to the paper in 1972, and had a kind of “back-and-forth” relationship with the paper, working on the copy desk for nine months and then for three years as a *Star-Bulletin* correspondent in Washington D.C.⁷⁹ Simonds was part of a Gannett corporate strategy at the *Star-Bulletin* that included putting him and Gialanella in key positions. The *Advertiser* had been gaining in circulation, and Gannett executives

⁷⁹ Interview with John Simonds, Dec, 11, 2003.

wanted a change in leadership, even though the *Star-Bulletin* under Duncan had won a competitive 1974 national award from the Associated Press Managing Editors for efforts locally on behalf of open government and press freedom. According to Simonds:

The feeling at Gannett — as it was conveyed to me — was that the *Advertiser* displayed more energy. There seemed to be a lack of urgency at the *Star-Bulletin*. It got out today's paper, and they could cover a big story if it happened during the PM news cycle, but the *Star-Bulletin* got caught up in a big dispute with Fasi — the politics of Fasi. The *Advertiser* did too, but somehow Fasi made it seem more personal with the *Star-Bulletin*.⁸⁰

Borreca, City Hall reporter during the dispute with Fasi in '73, had written several stories critical of Fasi, "raising serious allegations about honesty." Fasi withdrew from the press and didn't hold many press conferences. Borreca describes that time:

He singled me out in the crowd at one speech, and instead of it being about the city, it was about how evil the *Star-Bulletin* was. The HNA and the joint operating agreement was evil and they're breaking the law. It was the worst kind of press baiting that Frank engaged in. The dispute was finally settled in 1980.⁸¹

Simonds explained how he became managing editor:

⁸⁰ Simonds interview.

⁸¹ Interview with Richard Borreca, Oct. 16, 2003.

It was pretty obvious that Phil, during his four years as HNA general manager, didn't care much for a lot of the people who worked at the *Star-Bulletin*. So they had to make a change. Phil enters as publisher in late October 1975, then they put me in as managing editor. It didn't happen in one announcement. One thing happened Friday morning, another thing happened Friday afternoon and a third thing happened Friday night. Hobe became assistant publisher. That's Step 1. Then they announce that the publisher he's going to be assistant to is not Jack Scott, it's Phil Gialanella. Phil Gialanella came out here in 1971 as the general manager of the HNA. Phil and Jack spent a lot of time sparring with each other. And Phil was a guy who ingratiated himself with (*Advertiser* managers) Buchwach, Twigg-Smith and to a limited extent, Chaplin.⁸² Phil sold Gannett on the idea that the *Advertiser* had a lot more moxie.⁸³

The moves were indicative of Gannett's powerful influence from the mainland. Putting Gialanella in a strong position enabled one man to affect outer-island subscribers, who were eliminated. The clandestine changes in upper management surprised employees, and made them wary of Gannett, as one former staff member explained:

Simonds comes, and he's working the desk. Nobody knew who he was, and no one paid much attention to him. We had no idea this guy would become the boss.

⁸² Buck Buchwach, Thurston Twigg-Smith and George Chaplin of the *Advertiser*.

⁸³ Simonds interview.

He's just a nice guy, and he's around the desk, and he's a new guy, and nobody pays any attention. And then he vanishes because Gannett calls him back, Then, all of a sudden, Jesus, he walks into the newsroom and he's it. People were stunned. They were stunned. We were all stunned. That's the way Gannett operates. Later on, we certainly got the idea, which was probably true, that he was the guy watching it all. He goes back to Washington and is forgotten. Simonds told how Gannett put him in charge in a clandestine way:

I had known for months that I was probably going to come out here, but not sure how or when. They put me on a plane to come to Honolulu close to Halloween – the 29th or 30th. We can't tell anyone why you are going, don't tell anyone. Check in at the Ilikai. And the room has already been reserved so you don't have to give the hotel desk your name. It was real cloak and dagger stuff. So I got on the plane pretty much knowing why I was coming out here but they didn't tell me.

I went to a dinner with all these *Star-Bulletin* section editors, and they knew I was working in Washington. They asked, What are you doing back here? Back visiting. Unbeknownst to them Phil would announce at that dinner that I was managing editor. Like pulling a rabbit out of a hat. It was announced in the next day's paper. Hobe Duncan and Bud Smyser, who continued as editorial page editor, were very professional about the changes. Their support and patience were a big help, especially in the early weeks.⁸⁴

⁸⁴ Simonds interview.

Simonds has been married since 1968 to a Hawaiian woman, so he had ties to Hawai'i. Staff had mixed feelings about him; he represented a new era at the paper and some saw him as a "Gannett man," but others said he was a "an old newspaper man" who upheld traditional journalism values. One staff member he hired commented:

I think people perceived Simonds as a Gannett man. He was the guy who was the biggest ogre in the world, they thought. Some people were really unhappy and grouchy and didn't like the way the newspaper was going. The culture had changed. Simonds was a guy who wanted this paper managed. He didn't want people wandering off. But he had patience and long-term thinking that really helped the *Star-Bulletin*.

Simonds had hired dozens of people, and it was a diverse group. He put women in management positions:

His horizons were way above theirs (previous managers), and didn't see that (being a woman) as a problem. I think he wanted to change the temperament or the culture of the *Star-Bulletin*. The thing about Simonds was, he let you have independence. He'd tell you what he thought, or wanted; if he wasn't happy, he'd tell you. There were times when we'd have knock-down, drag-out fights. But it was a genuine exchange of information and ideas.

Simonds came on board when the atmosphere in the *Star-Bulletin* newsroom still had many of the characteristics of the old-style newsroom, as one employee nostalgically remembers it:

It was a whole different newspaper then (in 1970). When I started there it was a typical newsroom. The editors and reporters were hard-drinking and tough-talking. People used to smoke cigarettes and put them out on the floor — starting fires in trash cans. Everybody was a character. It was the most liberating place to work, as long as you did your job, people accepted you. There were curmudgeons galore on the copy desk. One seasoned copy editor told me, “Reporters are a dime a dozen, babe, but get to be a good copy editor and you’re worth your weight in gold.” A couple of people used to keep a bottle of gin in their drawers. At the end of the day people would drag themselves off to the Columbia Inn and other places around town. Everybody had a good time. It was liberating. You didn’t have to be careful about offending somebody. People didn’t take things personally.

Another former employee also commented that the *Star-Bulletin’s* atmosphere was fun, but frantic because of the many editions that staff put out under tight deadlines:

The *Star-Bulletin* of the early 1970s was kind of a fun place to work in — a frenetic place — but I’m not sure if it was the most responsible place. Essentially, the paper covered the community as far as the news that occurred during its PM

cycle, and it put out huge papers in those days. It was kind of a roller-coaster situation where some of some days they would have to put out 120-page papers, and then they would come back and the other days they would only have 40 or 50 pages. They had five editions in those days, and so it was a very chaotic place. The newspaper was not really in control of its product in the sense that there was so much space to fill on certain days and so many editions and so many changes that it was hard, in my opinion, for the managers at that time to really keep a handle on what was going on. There wasn't much time in the work day set aside for planning or follow through, and so every day was kind of like rediscovering a new world, and you would come in and you would rush all over the place, depending on what was happening.

During the early 1970s, because editors were consumed with simply getting the paper out, there wasn't enough accountability. It was the end of the Vietnam War era, but there were still some hangovers from the 1960s:

There was immaturity about the newsroom. There were some mainland guys, and open drug use at parties. People thought pot was going to be legalized. This was Nixon's era. There were open-faced politics about the war. People were circulating petitions against editorials. The paper was nominally Republican, but favored legalization of pot and was against the Vietnam War. Bud Smyser had his own free reign. Phil Gialanella created an editorial board, organized the letters to

the editor pages, put in an accountability system to verify letter writers' identification, stressed fairness, consistency and encouraged more people to contribute to the discussion. In the late '70s and early '80s they grew up.

There were also some leftover characteristics of the pre-Gannett era. Chinn Ho was still listed on the newspaper's masthead, and hosted the Christmas parties even though he wasn't around otherwise, as one reporter remembers:

It used to be in the 1970s the Christmas party was at the Ilikai (hotel) in Chinn Ho's penthouse, and the *Star-Bulletin* had a roast ham or roast turkey and we got off work in the late afternoon. It was about the only time we ever saw him. Chinn Ho was never in the newspaper.

The 1980s was a time when Simonds tried to create a "greater sense of urgency in the newsroom as well as instill more stability, planning and enterprise in the pursuit of information for readers:"

We wanted an operation in which people would think about what they we going to do tomorrow — to plan, to explore issues of interest to the public. The real problem that we had during the '70s was that the newspaper was operating much like a wire service. It was too reactive in its approach to news. You have to have a certain amount of daily spontaneity. But everything can't be that. You are trying to cover a large metropolitan area that has a lot of concerns and is going through a

lot of changes. The newsroom had to think more in those terms, as well as responding to the daily buzz of events. The challenge was how to develop the staff that's needed to cover a growing diverse city like Honolulu. You work with the people you have, and new hires when you can, and you never have the number of people you need. Instead of having 200 people making \$30,000 a year, you have got 100 people making \$60,000 a year because it takes a heck of a lot of money to live out here. Those are ballpark figures, but the point is that staff size has remained relatively constant with increases among page designers, copy editors and computer specialists. Staff wages have kept pace. That's been the tradeoff for many years.⁸⁵

Simonds explained that in the late 1970s, the *Star-Bulletin* published a couple of groundbreaking investigative series. These included Jim McCoy's series identifying leaders of organized crime in Hawai'i and John Christensen's heptachlor series in the early 1980s that looked at the threat to Hawai'i's milk supply from pineapple chop that had pesticides in it fed to dairy cows. The pesticide, DDT was legal in Hawai'i but not other states. The series focused on a cover-up by the state Health Department, which ignored the problem. In the late 1980s, the *Star-Bulletin* also published serialized excerpts of *Land and Power in Hawai'i* by George Cooper and Gavan Daws (1990) on how influential people acquired land and had government cooperation in developing it.

⁸⁵ Simonds interview.

Other influential stories dealt with government secrecy, which led to statewide hearings in 1987, and art fraud.

Some employees seemed to like the instability and spontaneity at the paper at that time. The newsroom culture changed under Simonds from a chaotic, reactive kind of place to one where planning and more direct managerial control over the newsroom, as employees perceived it. They were experiencing the beginning of the colonization of major newsrooms in Hawai'i by Gannett. Critics call it the homogenization of news, which has become one more product to be produced and sold in the most efficient and cost-effective manner. One employee's reflections on Gannett's policies and managers sums up the general perceptions of many of the staff about the company's policies and the changes they were going through in the late '70s, '80s and early '90s:

It's difficult to put in words, but the emphasis of the *Star-Bulletin* is on getting the job done, and getting the paper out. A lot of it had to do with the fact that we had fewer resources than the other paper. The thing about newspapers, particularly under Gannett, is not just getting the job done, but the manner in which the job is done, whether it fit criteria or not. When we were owned by Gannett; Gannett would often set up artificial guidelines. For example, they promulgated a strategy called NEWS 2000.⁸⁶ It was a pyramid, and they were convinced it was going to save newspapers.

⁸⁶ News 2000 was a corporate strategy for all newspapers owned by Gannett. It focused on encouraging Gannett papers to reflect their communities' diversity and foster interaction with readers. It was complex, and was perceived as a marketing strategy for newsrooms. The company decided to modify the strategy.

More control from above meant that Simonds followed Gannett's policy of hiring and promoting women and minorities, even though the paper did have a significant number of non-Caucasians on its staff. And he filled out a corporate form each year that reported on the number of employees who were minorities. "Gannett was certainly a pacesetter in that effort," Simonds said. A portion of annual bonuses paid to publishers was tied to their success in promoting women and minorities. As Simonds explained, "Partly, because of the diversity of its population and locally available job applicants, Hawai'i at least in earlier years had better minority and female numbers in its newsrooms than those of many other states." But Gannett's definition of what constitutes a minority didn't always apply so well to Hawai'i's diverse culture, as one employee perceived it:

Let's take ethnicity: managers had to determine that every ethnic group was reached, in order to broaden appeal of the newspaper; however, they used national standards for this. John Simonds would compile reports on how many ethnic groups were reached. Gannett would downgrade us because we didn't have enough black groups and too many Asians. Those are based on national standards that had nothing to do with Hawai'i.

Simonds said that when he arrived "it was a male-dominated fortress." Nobody wanted to be news editor, so he put Cynthia Oi in charge. Chuck Frankel had been news editor and went to the editorial pages "to give a younger person a chance." According to Simonds:

Cynthia was a lion tamer. She didn't take any guff from those guys.

Oi then became assistant managing editor for news and was overseeing everything except features, sports and the editorial page, which was a heavy burden. That included the copy desk, news, business and photos. She was also the assignment editor and did Page 1. One reporter recalled that Oi was a tough assignment editor, and pushed her to her limit to “get the story.”

In the Gannett era, the *Star-Bulletin* had the most diverse newsroom in the country, particularly in terms of management positions. The newsroom reflected the dominant groups in the islands, with women of Asian ancestry in management positions, such as Oi, Susan Yim, Catherine Shen and Lum. Shen was the first female Asian publisher at the *Star-Bulletin* and in the nation. She served from September 1986 to April 1989, immediately succeeded by Lum, who served until January 1993.⁸⁷ One staff member commented on Shen and Lum:

Gannett thought they'd kill two birds with one stone. First, female, second, Asian. They were trying to say, we're nice guys, we're not only for the Anglo-Saxon people. We're not prejudiced. We've got women, and not only that, they're Oriental.

⁸⁷ Lum was replaced by John Flanagan when Liberty bought the paper.

One woman in management under Gannett commented that “I was a “two-fer. I was a woman and I was Asian.” Another explained how Gannett’s policies helped to include otherwise invisible people in the news report:

I remember when Gannett really touted people of color. Gannett used to have an unwritten rule to have people of color on each main news page, kind of like a quota. That sounds like a goofball thing, but in a way that made sense. Gannett has done a lot for diversity. It is necessary for the need for diversity to be articulated. If they needed a mug, they would consciously think to use a minority or a woman.

A staff member’s gender or ethnicity didn’t seem to make a significant difference among newsroom staff interviewed about the 1980s. Some women mentioned that they felt some gender bias, but the comments below reflected the views of many staff members interviewed about women at the paper in the 1980s:

I really can’t recall a sense of that back then, that women were different as reporters, that there was any kind of step or gender thing. It’s good. I think the *Bulletin* to its credit wasn’t that way. I didn’t feel it at least. There were some reporters who were star reporters, or who were more prominent than others, but by and large it’s always been a decent place where, if you did do promising work, there was always room to grow and develop. People were pretty supportive back then. Even (reporter) Gregg Kakesako, who was gruff and didn’t say two words to

you unless he had to. But he was supportive. I like to think that it was I did good work, filled in the gaps and was a good kid. I really treasure that time. They never made me clean the fish tank or make coffee, (laughs) which I heard they did to Cynthia (Oi). Cynthia used to ask me, did they make you clean the fish tank yet?

Cleaning the fish tank appeared to be more a rite of passage than a gender-related issue. In the 1970s, some of the old newsroom culture and its apprenticeship-style system of the previous era still existed, and that included doing gopher jobs. There were enough employees to mentor new hires, according to one staff member, but during the '80s and '90s that gradually changed so that by the Black era, resources were so tight that editors didn't have time to spend training new employees. They had to figure out the newsroom culture and techniques on their own:

Now people — meaning editors — don't take the time to teach the new people at the *Star-Bulletin*. I have no idea how much hands-on training they have — to help them make the story better. You really don't have time to explain a poorly written headline. You just change it. I don't know if they do that.

One editor perhaps symbolized the more progressive '80s era best: Managing Editor G. William "Bill" Cox, who died of AIDS and wrote a story about his struggle, which was a first in those days when the AIDS problem had not come out into the open yet. Simonds hired Cox in 1984 from the *Louisville Courier-Journal* after Smyser retired

and Simonds took over the editorial page. Cox's AIDS story appeared on Sept. 1, 1986, the day he retired because of illness, and in 1990 a book was published about Cox's life in the *Star-Bulletin* newsroom while he had AIDS.⁸⁸ He wrote:

As a journalist I have spent my career trying to shed light in dark corners. AIDS is surely one of our darkest corners. It can use some light...By writing about AIDS I am following a tradition of journalists who have written about their illnesses to help educate, and, if blessed by finding the right words, to help others with the disease feel less alone.⁸⁹

A *Star-Bulletin* story about him said, "Opening up things — whether it was government records or long-boarded-up windows at the *Star-Bulletin* newsroom — was a big mission in his life."⁹⁰ One employee remembered him as an "interesting, cheerful and professional guy:"

He was a little guy with a lot of energy and humor. He insisted on raising standards. He did a newsletter every day that he posted on the bulletin board where he would critique the paper, both good and bad. Some of the older people said, how dare you critique us! But he'd praise you too. And his critiques were generally right on. He'd never name anyone when he'd criticize them, but would

⁸⁸ The book was by Steven Petrow, *Dancing Against the Darkness: A Journey Through America in the Age of AIDS*, Lexington, Mass: Lexington Books, 1990.

⁸⁹ Cox's story on the day he retired was titled: "A Journalist With AIDS," *Star-Bulletin*, Sept. 1, 1986.

name those he'd praise. It's basic management. Bill got sick. He was gay. He was one of the first guys we knew of who got AIDS. And he wrote a column about it. He was one of the first newspaper editors in the country to even admit AIDS existed, much less have it.

A former employee echoed those comments:

He was wonderful. He took the covers off the windows to open up the newsroom. He was energetic. He had a weasel in the corner office. Someone gave it to him to remind him of what he shouldn't become as managing editor.

People said he was "charming," but a "flash in the pan." After Cox died, Shapiro was brought in from Gannett News Service as managing editor.⁹¹

David Shapiro: The Heart and Soul of the *Star-Bulletin*

He oversaw the final years of the Gannett era and ran the paper during the Liberty years, although its business functions were still being run by the Gannett-owned Hawai'i Newspaper Agency. Employees said Shapiro was a smart man who knew the community better than Cox because he had grown up in Hawai'i. He was born on the mainland but came to Hilo as a teenager. He started working for the *Star-Bulletin* when he was a student at Hilo College. He had gotten married and needed a job, as he recalls:

⁹⁰ "Journalist Bill Cox dies after long AIDS battle," *Star-Bulletin*, May 20, 1988, A1.

A posting went up for an editorial clerk or an intern for the guy who ran the *Star-Bulletin* Big Island bureau at the time, named Jack Bryan. I believe I was the only one who applied. Back then I had a beard and shaggy hair and was given to wearing shorts and slippers. I was really actually surprised when I got the job. My main job was to file things and write obituaries — do really routine stories. Every once in a while I'd run into a story, and Jack would let me write it. When I came over (to Oahu), the *Star-Bulletin* gave me a job as a part-time reporter, and ultimately I became a full-time reporter.⁹²

In '73 the Big Island reporting job opened and Shapiro took it. He stayed there until 1978, then went to Washington D.C. with Gannett News Service to be the Hawai'i correspondent. He ultimately became news editor of Gannett News Service. In 1986 Shapiro was sent to Marin County to start a California wire for the Gannett California newspapers. But in 1987 he was offered the managing editor position at the *Star-Bulletin*. He went, even though he would have preferred to have stayed in San Francisco, because he thought he could help the *Star-Bulletin*. Shapiro seemed to be reacting to the strong forces from the mainland, symbolized by Gannett, while understanding the realities of the

⁹¹ John Walston came in temporarily after Cox died.

⁹² Shapiro interview.

newspaper as a business. He had to do a careful balancing act in reconstructing a culture that he idealistically remembered. He wanted to build a crusading newspaper again.

He said:

I had some real concerns about the direction the *Star-Bulletin* had been taking. It was currying favor with various interests in the community that were close to the publisher. So when I came back, what I wanted to do was to restore some of the old culture that I had first experienced with the *Star-Bulletin*. But I was savvy to the corporate side of it too. I had worked in the belly of the beast, so to speak, for nine years (with Gannett News Service).

We would never have the resources to be a great newspaper every day. But we could have great moments if we took our shots carefully. So I wanted to concentrate on making more of those great moments happen. Nobody ever calls you about the story you didn't have on Page A8 about the zoning commission meeting, or if you do have it, they don't remember you for it. They remember you for Broken Trust.

So when Shapiro came on board, he was ready to make some changes:

I felt Phil Gilanella had run the paper into the ground, had a hidden agenda and was tied to too many people. The staff was demoralized. I wanted to rebuild it.

Since Gannett was planning to sell the *Star-Bulletin*, that's why no money was put into it.⁹³

Shapiro encouraged reporters to give up most of their ties to local community organizations to avoid a conflict of interest. Staff could belong to a community organization as long as it wasn't directly connected to their beat or compromised their ability to do their job. "I thought it was a conflict of interest that gave these groups an unfair advantage over similar groups that didn't have the benefit of *Star-Bulletin* staff representation on their publicity committee," Shapiro said.

But reporters and editors enjoyed the freedom they had. "Shapiro was inclined to let people have their head and do the best work they could," one reporter said. The *Star-Bulletin*, which had been moving away from being what journalists call "an editor's paper," was truly a writer's paper under Shapiro. Gannett had sent reporters and editors to workshops to improve their writing, as well as give them opportunities to work for a few months for *USA TODAY* under a loaner program that helped to establish that paper in the 1980s by drawing on the resources of Gannett's successful papers. In a writer's paper, reporters have more freedom to select what they want to write about, and stories are less likely to receive heavy editing or conform to a particular tone or style. Shapiro commented on how the Liberty years enabled the paper to do more hard-hitting stories because there fewer distracting Gannett corporate requirements to deal with:

⁹³ Shapiro interview.

All that bureaucracy was just gone and I could just concentrate on the news. I could make quick decisions without consulting anybody as long as I stayed within budget, whereas before I would have to go through three or four weeks of review to get approval. I could just do it. “What Price Paradise” — I approved travel for that the day it was presented to me. I approved the increased newshole for it. I’m not sure I even told John (Flanagan, the executive editor and his boss) about it until two days before it appeared. I told him, “You’d better put on your cast-iron jock strap. Retailers are about to get mighty pissed at us.” He said, “OK.” We just did it. If a reporter or editor came up with a good idea, we just did it. If I came up with an idea, I could just get it done.⁹⁴

But being a writer’s paper wasn’t all great. It was also an indication of the absence of editors, as one former reporter explained:

My impression was we were under-edited. The City desk was so understaffed. Getting the paper out took everything.

Shapiro was a hands-off manager, so a few staff thought that sometimes problems would turn into crises before he or anyone had the time and focus to solve them:

⁹⁴ Shapiro interview.

When a crisis would happen and they'd call a big staff meeting, people would have really good ideas and what to do, or what the problem was and how to solve it. But the normal course of affairs was that you would never have occasion to offer those insights. You'd never get to participate at that level. People who were there usually knew how to fix things if you asked them. When communications got so bad that half the newsroom is going to quit unless something happens, it's, OK, we're going to have a big meeting and listen.

Another editor commented:

The genius of Dave Shapiro was that he gave free reign to good reporters and editors, and backed them up, and together they did great work. Unfortunately, after Gwenda left, we didn't have a strong city desk for years, so the lesser reporters didn't get the direction and editing they needed. The *Advertiser* was a much more consistent paper, but it had fewer of the high-impact stories and layouts that the *Bulletin* had. On its best days, the *Bulletin* could blow you away with fabulous stuff that was as good as anything done at any newspaper in the country.

Shapiro gave many years of his life to the *Star-Bulletin*, particularly during the crisis period after its closure was announced in 1999. He went on disability leave before Black emerged as a buyer, and arranged with Liberty to continue writing his column,

“Volcanic Ash.” Black asked for Shapiro’s unpaid help working on the sale, and he obliged. After the sale, Black made it clear to Shapiro that he should try to get his disability benefits covered by Liberty or Gannett. To avoid a conflict of interest, Shapiro stopped writing his column for the *Star-Bulletin*. Staff members understand why his circumstances at the time forced him to leave the paper. One staff member explained that Shapiro’s commitment to the community and to the paper’s survival made him the “heart and soul” of the *Star-Bulletin*.

I’ve had my run-ins with Dave, but I think Dave tried to run a fair newsroom. I’ve always gotten a sense from Dave that, no matter what the personalities might be, he does care about the news and the community. And for a journalist that’s hard to ignore, or hard to forget, or to not respect. Especially during the last years at Kapi‘olani Boulevard, Dave was the heart and soul of the *Star-Bulletin*. He tried mightily to keep us alive and to maintain some level of standard when it was very difficult to. I give him a lot of credit for that. Even when we were Gannett and Dave was under Gannett, he was the buffer in a lot of ways. He had to do a lot of reports. The news pyramid, News 2000. We did ’em. There are some ideas there that are very valid. Despite rolling the eyes at News 2000 — it’s like cookie-cutter journalism and all that — there are some nuggets of good ideas. It’s good to have a structure rather than not have any structure at all. At least people know what is on the line; people have some direction, some vision.

Some staff members remember him as a hero because of his leadership and the freedom they gave him to pursue stories. Rob Perez commented:

I really valued Dave Shapiro's leadership because he would recognize the potential for the things that I would propose and he would allow me the freedom to pursue it. I could have easily fallen flat on my face (when I) proposed going to the West Coast to do that "What Price Paradise" series, I had no idea what I would find when I did that survey. I said, Dave, this is my idea, to compare at a representative sample of goods from Hawaii Orange County, Sacramento, and Seattle. I told him, I have no clue what I'm going to find once I do this, but it's one way to test this notion of having to pay the price of paradise. He felt the foresight to be able to say, "That could be really hot. You could come up with some really eye-opening things." He authorized me to spend the money to fly.⁹⁵

Shapiro hired managers who shared his crusading vision of going after high-impact stories, much like those in the Riley Allen era. Going after the big story, rather than trying to be a paper of record that covered everything, became a hallmark of the *Star-Bulletin's* culture under Shapiro. Shapiro and staff who were there during his years talk about the *Star-Bulletin's* identity in terms of important stories that they did a good job on. Shapiro explains how he helped create a newsroom culture that was focused on

⁹⁵ Interview with Rob Perez, Nov. 18, 2003.

the big story, partly because it mattered to him, and partly because of dwindling resources:

It immediately became obvious to me that there were a lot of stories that really had impact in the community that we weren't covering, so the first thing I did was hire a like-minded city editor. I hired Gwenda Iyechad and right off the bat we did things like the beginning of the huge wave of Japanese investment. A lot of the leading companies in Hawaii were going under Japanese ownership. And to my amazement, nobody had really ever explored that. So very early we did a series on the Japanese ownership of Hawaii business. We did a scenario where a tourist comes to town, and stays in this hotel, goes with the tour company and shops in this store, and every dollar he spends goes to Japan.

We did a piece called "The Blue Battleground" about all the fights over competition for use of the ocean: Jet skiers, parasailors, sailboards, surfers, swimmers and fishermen. This is a gut issue for Hawai'i and nobody every really looked at it. So we did a five-part series.

We sent (Linda) Hosek to Fiji to cover the revolution there. The *Star-Bulletin* hadn't sent anybody out of state, much less out of country, for 10 years. But it had an important regional impact. I tried to get out the message that these were the kind of stories that were going to get you attention and rewards, and I praised the hell out of people who did it. I tried to set up a reward system for excellent work, and I also made it clear to people that I wasn't going to bust their chops every

time they missed some story the *Advertiser* had on Page A8. I just ended the practice of going through the *Advertiser* every morning and saying, Why didn't we have this? Why didn't we have this? Why didn't we have this?

You want people to be freed from their beats to work on special projects. You can't expect them to cover a beat like a blanket and still produce projects.

Something's got to give. I wanted to clear out some of the bureaucracy that made it difficult for people to do their work. It was mainly to take a lot of the bureaucracy upon myself and not let it get past me so other people didn't have to worry about it.

The *Star-Bulletin* reporters focused on doing stories and taking photos that made a difference. Investigative reporter Ian Lind wrote stories on state corruption in the use of airport money for a racetrack, on local politicians involved in the national Democratic fundraising scandal and a large fraud case. The paper produced excellent coverage of an airline accident in which a plane lost part of its roof but landed safely, as Shapiro explains:

We really did a good job of covering the Aloha Airlines (incident).⁹⁶ We stepped up our act of spot news coverage of big stories. I thought that set a new standard for the community. That made a difference. What we were trying to do was focus on things that made a big impact on the community and spend less energy on

things that had lesser impact. We had no desire to be a newspaper of record. The *Advertiser* could have that distinction. And as much as possible I wanted to focus on high-impact stories -- produce those great moments where we could. Then after, I guess, the late '80s early '90s, the energy started to diminish. Corporate started cutting our budget and we lost some of those positions we gained. The economy was tough. There was less urgency. They considered the *Star-Bulletin* fixed and were moving on to other priorities.⁹⁷

Shapiro responded to Gannett's diversity program by going beyond quotas and attempting to cover stories that mattered to Hawai'i's diverse community — following to a certain degree in the steps of Riley Allen. Shapiro explained:

One thing I wanted to do was make it the paper a voice that speaks for all elements of the community, not just speaks to the community. This meant having a diverse staff that represented all elements of the community. Gannett always had a diversity program aiming to hire more women and minorities, which was fine, but their program was mostly about numbers. In Hawai'i, I thought we needed to be to be a lot more sophisticated than that. I didn't see much difference between hiring a reporter of Caucasian ancestry and hiring a reporter of Japanese ancestry, or Chinese ancestry, which were well-represented on staff. Under-

⁹⁶ In the late 1980s an Aloha Airlines jet on its way to an outer island lost part of the top of its fuselage during a flight. It returned safely. A flight attendant was killed.

⁹⁷ Shapiro interview.

privileged minorities were the people the paper wasn't speaking to — people of Filipino ancestry, Hawaiians and Pacific islanders. That's where I tried to focus diversity efforts. We were very successful with people of Filipino ancestry at the Star-Bulletin. We not only diversified, but we diversified with quality people. I had less success with Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders. Part of it is that there's little tradition of journalism in the culture.⁹⁸

Shapiro was not a hands-on editor like some of his predecessors, but tended to prefer delegating to “strong assistant managing editors and section editors, so that I could devote the bulk of my attention to the high-impact stuff.” He preferred to “stay out of section editors' faces” because he personally preferred minimal interference in his job. “A good manager can create an environment where the work can get done without his constant personal presence,” he said. His door was always open, and he felt that the best way of communicating was by being available and insisting that other editors be available too. Employees were rewarded for good work with in-house awards, good beats and stories, bonuses, good travel assignments and out-of-state training. Some complained, however, that many more reporters than editors got awards; copy editors were somewhat invisible because they didn't have bylines.

One editor who made a big difference during Shapiro's years and afterward was Michael Rovner, the assistant editor who was the creative genius behind the *Star-*

⁹⁸ Shapiro interview.

Bulletin's risk-taking design. The paper has tended to look more appealing because it run bigger photos and use jazzier and more colorful layouts than the *Advertiser* and many mainland newspapers. He echoes Shapiro's high-impact strategy:

In my mind, it's guerilla warfare. You hit, and you pull back. You hit, and you pull back.⁹⁹

Rovner and the paper's graphics editors have created an X-Men-type comic book showcasing the University of Hawai'i's football team (the H-Men), special pull-out commemorative sections on the *Nisei* soldiers of World War II, Pearl Harbor, the USS Missouri, the Hoku'lea (Hawaiian sailing ship) and others. He came to the *Star-Bulletin* in 1987 from a newspaper in Michigan, and before that from the *Pacific Daily News* on Guam, and quickly made his mark as features editor. At the time, the *Star-Bulletin* was an easy-going place, as he remembers it:

Having come from Michigan, I was struck by how casual it was. I had been away from Guam for a while. In some ways it still is. In some ways it's nice, but in some ways we need more get up and go. We're competing.

As the editor in charge of visuals, Shapiro gave Rovner a lot of freedom, which he says he still has under Frank Bridgewater. He believes in having fun. It's a Rovner signature design when the nameplate is punctured by a basketball player, or carried off by ants. He explains:

⁹⁹ Interview with Michael Rovner, Dec. 19, 2003.

The nameplate was almost an accent, understatement. I played around a lot with the nameplate for special projects when appropriate. I have to have a reason to hit the nameplate — it's compelling visually. Is there news value to it? (Graphics artist) Kevin Hand and I had a big spread on dinosaurs and had them ripping off the nameplate, and ants carrying off a piece of it. There was a logical reason for it. Whether we're being sacrilegious for playing with the nameplate, to me that's subject to interpretation. We want to make people stop, to make people look and to have fun. I think newspapers should be fun. Yes, you have to have purpose. But at the same time, that within that frame, we can have some fun. There's so much competition out there — television and other media. I think we have to take chances. Some are not going to work as well as others, but we should not shy away from trying. Dave did allow us to try.¹⁰⁰

Rovner began creating a “local” look for the paper, using symbols that would represent Hawai‘i in the minds of readers. He experimented with tapa designs, a hibiscus flower, color, and modified logos and sidebars that later started appearing instead in the *Advertiser* after Black’s designers redesigned the *Star-Bulletin*. In many ways Rovner represents the free spirit of the *Star-Bulletin*, much of which took hold under the Liberty years and has gone through some adjustment under the belt-tightening competitive years

¹⁰⁰ Rovner interview.

under Black. Rovner has a drawerful of awards for excellence in design from the Society of Professional Journalists and the Society of News Design.

Before Shapiro left the *Star-Bulletin*, he recognized that editors like Rovner and the others could put the paper out without him. He knew then that it was time to move on, particularly since his health was deteriorating after a stressful year helping to keep the paper afloat. He had been working from 4:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. for years:

What made me finally decide I was finished, I think, was when the Uyesugi verdict came down after I'd gone home for the day.¹⁰¹ I was dragging that day. As soon as I get home I get a call about the Uyesugi verdict. Normally I would have gone rushing back to take care of that. In this case, even Frank (Bridgewater) wasn't there. He was on vacation. I was just shot. I just couldn't go back. I asked Mike and Lucy (Young-Oda) to take care of it. And they did a really great job without me. The structure was in place to get the job done. We had good people down the line who could get the job done.¹⁰²

Shapiro left a legacy of good hires, a committed and loyal staff — and a paper that survived. But the atmosphere in the newsroom had been so tense during the year-and-a-half period of uncertainty that the rumor mill in the newsroom flourished, including gossip about Shapiro's future. Shapiro's encounter with *Advertiser* Publisher

¹⁰¹ Byran Uyesugi shot six workers to death at the Xerox office building in Honolulu Nov. 2, 1999.

¹⁰² Shapiro interview.

Mike Fisch inside and outside the third floor bathroom in the News Building symbolically foretold his future. The third floor restroom was by the executive offices, not the newsroom, which was on the second floor, but it was the only one with wheelchair access, and Shapiro was in a wheelchair. It was outside this restroom that Shapiro shook hands with Fisch, symbolizing his future. He described the event that, at the time, seemed relatively insignificant:

So the following Monday, they were taking a last picture of the *Star-Bulletin* staff in the old newsroom and some people asked me to come, so I went down for that. And I went to the bathroom on the third floor, which was the only one I could get into in my wheelchair. It's right by Mike Fisch's office. On my way up, Fisch, saw me through the door. He came out to say hello. We shook hands and wished each other well. The conversation lasted about 30 seconds. Somebody saw me shaking hands with Fisch and assumed I had been in his office making a deal with the *Advertiser*. In fact, there were no discussions whatsoever about writing my column for the *Advertiser* until several months later. I went back into the newsroom, and people started asking me if I was going to write my column for the *Advertiser*. I said I have absolutely no plans to but thought I wouldn't rule it out. It wasn't until three or four months later, after a lot of things happened. . . I was bored as hell. My column had won the Hawai'i Publishers Association award for the second year in a row. I'm sitting here with an award-winning column that I love to write. . . So then I start to hear from people fairly high up that they were

looking for a way out of the *Star-Bulletin*. Why should I fall on a sword for these guys when they not even falling on a sword for themselves? They're looking to move on, why shouldn't I move on? So I called the *Advertiser*.¹⁰³

Shapiro had never set foot in the *Advertiser* newsroom, and if *Advertiser* people came into the *Star-Bulletin* to see friends, he threw "their asses" out. Once, when the carpet was being changed in the *Star-Bulletin*, the carpet company asked him to go look at the carpet next door. He refused. "Bring samples," he said. Staying out of the *Advertiser* newsroom was symbolic of the editorial and emotional separation he felt between the two papers. In 2003 he said he doesn't think the *Star-Bulletin* is still doing the kind of hard-hitting journalism it used to. The sacred cows among advertisers and other interests are not being covered.

Frank Bridgewater and the Black Years

After Shapiro left, Bridgewater had to get the paper out by taking on several management positions at once. Simonds hired him from the *New York Times* in 1985 as business editor, and he had also worked for *The Wall Street Journal*. Later, he became assistant managing editor, overseeing business, features and city. In 2000 when Shapiro stepped down he became acting managing editor, and after the city editor left, he took

¹⁰³ Shapiro interview.

that on too, sitting out in the newsroom assigning stories while managing the entire news operation.

He and the other staff were committed to their belief in the reasons the paper was saved — to maintain a second voice in the islands, and he understood the importance of another outlet for mass-market advertisers. They sensed that turnover was lower at the *Star-Bulletin* than at the *Advertiser*. But some staff members said they felt the paper had fallen behind because of the tough competition and slack economy in the early millennium, although that strengthened in 2004. One staff member commented:

The *Star-Bulletin* is operating on a shoestring and clearly has fallen behind the *Advertiser* in terms of breadth and consistency of coverage and commentary.

However, the *Star-Bulletin* still has a lot of talented managers and staff who are steeped in the old culture and full of pride. They still have their special moments that continue to make the *Star-Bulletin* a credible newspaper very much worth reading. I worry about the trend of not replacing or hiring low-scale tyros to replace experienced staff that departs. To their credit, editors have pushed some quality hires through the Black management, such as reporters Sally Apgar and Susan Essoyan. They'll need more of these to remain competitive.

When perceived job security started to diminish and salaries were cut to avoid layoffs, the paper lost several talented staff members. Nevertheless, a better economy has helped advertising revenues and circulation. Under Publisher Frank Teskey, Bridgewater had

been given freedom to run the paper as he saw fit. Teskey was replaced by a surprise hire — Dennis Francis, the *Advertiser's* general manager and No. 2 man. It was a big loss for the *Advertiser*, and Francis gained additional responsibility as both business manager and publisher of the *Star-Bulletin*.¹⁰⁴ Symbolically, his move reflected the integration of business and editorial functions at the highest level. It remains to be seen how this change will affect the newsroom staff.

Heroes

Some of the leaders of the *Star-Bulletin* were considered heroes too. Allen, Smyser, Cox, Simonds and Shapiro were called heroes for their crusading nature or for their dedication to the paper, the community and to journalism. But there were others that staff members often brought up in interviews. It was their “fighting spirit” that became synonymous with the *Star-Bulletin's* identity. Helen Altonn, who was hired in 1955, was someone many staff members talked about:

She has a fighting spirit and energy that has always marked the *Star-Bulletin*. For me, she has been the one constant guiding force through all my time here.

It's highly unusual for anybody to be a career reporter in this business. To work as a reporter throughout their career at all, to do it with that kind of dedication, commitment and energy is extremely rare. I can think of only one other besides

¹⁰⁴ “Francis appointed Bulletin publisher,” *Star-Bulletin*, Thursday, June 3, 2004, Page A1 & A9.

Helen in all my time in the newspaper business. She's got as much fire in her now as she did the first time I met her.

She's a go-to person. If I was City editor and I needed something fast and I needed it quick, I'd give it to Helen. She would have everything. She would count people's toenails. She got the details. And she would not take to some upstart editing her copy.

Others mentioned several other staff:

There were some people who just impressed the hell out of me. Helen Altonn, who just keeps plugging away. Lois Taylor, feature writer, is just pretty amazing. Within the first week I was hired, I had to copy edit a Lois Taylor story and I had to tell her that her lead was in the last paragraph, and she said, yes, you're right. She's a total professional. She could write about anything and make it interesting. That's really inspiring. She's one of these people who drummed it into you — the littlest, dullest story in the newspaper still means something to someone. You are here to serve the readers. Put your effort into the little stories too.

Lois Taylor was one of the best writers to have worked there. She was very perceptive in understanding people. People would ask that she'd do a piece. She might stick a zinger in there, but that was OK because she knew how to put the

needle into people without drawing too much blood. She had a very good writing style. She was very clear. She wasn't one of these people who would try to overwhelm you with her cleverness. You could go send her to the Legislature to do a color piece and it would you wouldn't have to worry about someone accusing her of taking a cheap shot. She was a great asset.

Others, like Mary Adamski, were commended because of their commitment:

People who struck it through, like Mary Adamski, who still manages to maintain this professionalism even though she's down sometimes, there's still there this core of what it means to be a journalist.

Helen Altonn, and Mary Adamski are heroes. They've been out here a long time. They're hard-working and hardly ever make any mistakes. Mary can cover anything — religion, police, features, obits, sports. She's had a good rapport with the police. She knows all the religious people. She's a night person. Helen Altonn has been the lifeblood of the *Star-Bulletin* for decades, tirelessly finding important news in the actions of government, prisons, welfare, family court, parole board, areas too often ignored. Lois Taylor was a hero for her willingness and talent for reporting with insight and humor in covering the local scene in all its changes.

Several people talked about cartoonist Corky Trinidad:

Corky is a hero. Corky is an artistic genius, a political genius. Where he gets his ideas I have no idea. This guy is just so brave and straightforward and irreverent. The guy just does his own thing. He hits it. Sometimes you can't understand it; it's too obtuse, but that's 1 percent of the time. But 99 percent of the time the guy is right on. You don't know where it's coming from – from Heaven or something. I think when we had the most valuable staffer, he was the first winner of that — the internal awards. And that's saying a lot, because there are a lot of talented people there.

Corky, who goes by his first name, was hired during the time that Smyser, Duncan and Couey had a hand in running the newsroom, and there was some confusion about who was in charge of hiring, it seems. It was the late 1960s, and martial law had come to the Philippines. Corky decided it was time to leave, so he wrote to the *Star-Bulletin*. Couey had offered him a job, but in the meantime Smyser had hired someone else, who later didn't work out, and Corky got the job. He had the freedom to do as he liked, and produced many award-winning cartoons. He said Fasi had a hand in helping his fame, and told a story about his run-in with the former mayor:

It takes a year or so for people to get to know you, but it took all of one week for people to get to know me. Frank Fasi was going to the Philippines on a junket – one of those sister city things – going to Lauag – just because there are so many

Ilocanos here in Hawai'i from Lauag he's going to the north. So, I drew a cartoon poking fun at the junket. I drew Lauag women – big cigars, woman with the long cigars. Pedicabs. One woman says, maybe he is coming here to study our pollution problems, and the other one says, maybe he is here to study our mass transportation. And Fasi that time had a TV show Saturday, and he lit into me; devoted half an hour hitting this new cartoonist from the *Star-Bulletin*, saying that I was anti-Filipino. He said, "It's typical of these Coast *haoles* to come here and start. . .you know..." So the *Star-Bulletin*, did a writeup in the paper about the mayor giving it to me, and the ending was: Oh, by the way, Mr. Mayor, Corky Trinidad is a Filipino; he's not a Coast *haole*.¹⁰⁵

All the staff members who survived the crises of 2000 were heroes too, as one editor commented, but about a dozen of them worked long hours and held the paper together.

If there are any heroes, it's everybody who worked during that year of hell (2000) where you kind of walked in, not knowing from day to day what the judge was going to rule. A lot of us just were people who were able to stick together, kind of like a collective force. We still found ways to have fun — gallows humor or whatever it was.

¹⁰⁵ Interview with Corky Trinidad, Nov. 19, 2001.

Many staff members were mentioned by one editor because of the stories they covered. Was David Black a hero? Many said he was, for saving the paper, and for keeping it open even though the paper was clearly losing money. But several years after he took over, tough competition began to affect staff perceptions, like this comment from one staff member:

At the time that David Black bought the paper, people were talking about him like a knight in shining armor. He's there to save the two-newspaper system in Hawai'i. Of course he did that, but to me, David Black is a bottom-line businessman. He's not some crusading journalist.

Without Black, the paper probably would not have survived, and Black has stayed committed even though the paper is not making money. Advertising sales from *MidWeek* are helping to keep it alive. Staff members yearn for the "salad days" under Liberty. Saving the paper was important to them from a journalistic watchdog point of view, which didn't include business reasons. For them, the biggest heroes were everyone at the paper who held on during the crisis and during the transition to a new owner and a new era for the *Star-Bulletin*. The crisis helped them bond together and form an identity and loyalty that they carried with them. Could they transfer their loyalty to the *Star-Bulletin* to the new hires, and could the economic reality of lower salaries and tough competition retain longtime staff members? What symbolic aspects of culture and identity of the *Star-*

Bulletin were retained in the years after Black took over? These questions are discussed in the final chapter after a discussion of the impact of structure, routines and local values on the *Star-Bulletin's* culture and identity.

CHAPTER 5
IMPACT OF LOCAL CULTURE AND NEWS VALUES ON *STAR-BULLETIN*
CULTURE AND IDENTITY

I believe *Star-Bulletin* journalists live the ideology of journalism as espoused in the Society of Professional Journalists' Code of Ethics as much as they can in their harried working lives. I say this not just because of what they have told me, but as a result of what I have observed. The leaders and heroes in the previous chapter exhibited these values. The actions of staff members and the stories that were published have provided evidence to support their ideology, but some of its values are open to broad interpretation, especially in Hawai'i's unique environment.

The impact of local culture and values emerged in the interviewees' comments in terms of what it means to be a journalist in Hawai'i, and in self-referential discourse. In this chapter I discuss news judgment, the notions of objectivity and fairness, reporting styles and expressions of these when they intersect with local culture.

How do journalists decide what is newsworthy? Timeliness is always at the top of the list. Relevance to the community is also key, what impact the news might have, and whether anyone powerful or famous is involved. These are American guidelines that *Star-Bulletin* journalists follow, but they are broad and subject to interpretation within one's own environment and culture. What might seem newsworthy to someone who has lived in Hawai'i for a long time might not seem important to someone "fresh off the boat." Some of the *Star-Bulletin* editors speculate that the importance and immediacy of the "Broken Trust" essay may have been misunderstood by a mainland editor at the

Advertiser who was first offered the editorial piece. The *Star-Bulletin* ran the story as soon as it was offered to Shapiro and Chang, two self-identified “locals” who immediately understood its significance to Hawai‘i because it was written by prominent Hawaiians. On the other hand, being local might have had nothing to do with it. It could be argued that it was simply a matter of having a different sense of what was newsworthy and a sense of caution about running the essay.

Shapiro explains how he decides what’s newsworthy:

You are a professional and you watch the news, you watch the goings-on in the community for years and talk to people; you listen to what people are talking about and care about. You get a feeling for what’s important. A lot of newspapers these days do it by phone and surveys. What gets you there is really knowing your community at the street level and knowing what people are really talking about and really care about.

Rob Perez, originally from Guam, who once had a column titled “Raising Cane” that appropriately describes his attitude, explains how SPJ values translate into news judgment and newsworthy story selection:

My view is that the watchdog mission is the most important mission for the newspaper. How I decide is that, basically, it’s sort of this gut instinct that it (something) doesn’t seem right. When I’m analyzing what I’m digging into, does

it seem like it's inappropriate or illegal? That's pretty much how I approach things.

Instinct seems to play a large role among staff in deciding what's news. But the role of newspapers is not just to be a watchdog on the powerful, but to explain everyday life, according to one reporter:

One of the things we need to do as journalists is not just explore the weirdness that happens every day, but to help us understand our daily lives. Things change in such an incremental pace in modern society that sometimes we get left behind. We don't understand the pace of change, and newspapers help you keep up to date with that.

The SPJ Code of Ethics asks journalists to seek the truth and not to deliberately distort information or misrepresent. They are encouraged to "tell the story of the diversity and magnitude of the human experience boldly, support the open exchange of views and give voice to the voiceless" (Society of Professional Journalists Code of Ethics, 2003). Journalists are to avoid conflicts of interest, real or perceived, and be accountable by admitting mistakes and correcting them, and invite dialogue with the public about journalism and the news media. Journalists are supposed to strive for objectivity, but have different interpretations about what that means. Today, most journalists recognize that there is only subjectivity; "objectivity" has come to mean that "fairness" and

“balance” are represented in stories, although media critics still complain about the notion of objectivity.

This notion of fair and balanced reporting is the standard that *Star-Bulletin* reporters hold themselves to, but in Hawai‘i it is an imported value. The interviews showed that these imported mainland values and norms are not questioned by the local journalists. Most of them were “mentored” in the standard American newspaper newsroom culture and/or attended journalism schools that also taught the same ethical standards and techniques. However, these people may differ from their mainland colleagues in how they pursue stories and in their relationships with those they interview. This is when the intersection of imported journalism and unique “local” culture in Hawai‘i influences the organizational culture and news content of the *Star-Bulletin*. The stories of the interviewees represent the interconnectedness of local culture concepts and journalism values and techniques.

Having roots in Hawai‘i can give a reporter a strong cultural advantage. For example, staff writer Crystal Kua, in reporting on the murder by “local” men of Dana Ireland, a young woman bicycling one Christmas Eve on the Big Island (Hawai‘i), was able to produce award-winning stories partly because she is from Hilo. Her Hilo connection was a big advantage in opening the doors of sources. She commented on how people reacted to her phone calls for interviews: “Oh yeah! You’re so-and-so’s daughter! OK! And they’d start talking.”

Some journalists at the *Star-Bulletin* said they believed that there was a local perspective that could be brought to reporting and writing. Others didn't think that being local made any difference; good journalism is good journalism no matter where you are from. Good journalism means listening and reporting about as many voices as possible, as well as being aggressive in reporting wrongdoings. The journalists who were born outside Hawai'i and who had lived in Hawai'i a long time, even as children, were more likely to focus their comments on the mainland value of what makes good journalism. The journalists who were born and raised in Hawai'i were more likely to weigh in favorably on the benefits of being local. One part-Hawaiian staff writer explained that a story by a colleague on the first homeless woman and her family who camped at A'ala Park — a park that many homeless people later took shelter in — told a sympathetic tale, and that maybe having had “local” experiences could have helped the writer because of her ability to speak Pidgin English (local dialect) and be accepted by the source. The *Star-Bulletin* was the only news organization in Hawai'i that covered her story with this unique local perspective, she said. She makes her case:

Jeanne (Mariani) did a story once on the first homeless resident in A'ala Park. She was a local woman with lots of kids. And what Jeanne did — she didn't make us feel sorry for this woman — but she told the story in a way that you understood about why she was there. To me, it broke a lot of the stereotypes of what a homeless person is. And this lady was married and all she was brought up to be was a good mother and a good wife. And she had all these kids with her husband.

She didn't go school because of that — it was her role in life was to be a mother. And the guy just split on her and was gone. She had nothing. She had no education; she had nothing. She was homeless. You understood. And she (Jeanne) brought that across so clearly.

I'm not sure how much of Jeanne's upbringing and experiences here helped bring that out. I don't remember getting that same feeling by reading or seeing (other stories). Everybody had it — you know — it was the first woman. Jeanne could go in and turn it on. She could mingle with the person on the beach, and she could mingle with a visiting dignitary or the president of the United States. It was story that everyone was going to get, but the way she wrote it and her perspective on it really made me understand a little bit better what she was going through, why that woman was there, and why it was a big deal for her to be in this pit.

I'm not saying that somebody from the Mainland can't do it — you know, come in and do the same story. But there are connections, and turning on the Pidgin when you need to turn it on. Some people are just a little reluctant to talk to somebody they think is smarter than they are, and may be intimidated by it.

Many of the journalists interviewed had lived on the mainland, but commented that their Hawai'i experience helped them:

Having the Hawai‘i roots gave us (the ability to) look at stories differently. I’m not sure it was more local, but it was more in a style that our readers kind of latched on to.

From Martin’s fragmentary perspective, this viewpoint is ambiguous and reflects the complexity of local identity. Some of those who take this perspective sometimes don’t recognize what it is and how it benefits them and their readers, or that they have power in using this identity. It’s a “style” that is courageous, but not bold in the aggressive sense of the word.

The SPJ code of ethics uses words such as courageous and bold to describe the ideal journalist; however, those attributes have come to mean different things to journalists in at the *Star-Bulletin*, where being “bold” is synonymous with being aggressive, arrogant and from the mainland. On the other hand, mainland “aggressiveness” can be a beneficial attribute, some of the staff members said. A former longtime employee mentioned that only a *Star-Bulletin* reporter “not from here” would have dared to do a story that attacked the trustees of a large school established by a former princess — Kamehameha Schools — and the powerful and well-paid Bishop Estate trustees who oversaw the schools:

We couldn’t send (just) anybody up there. That wasn’t something a local person could do. They would have too many ties. So we had to send somebody up there

— a dirt digger. (Reporter X) was great for that. He was a nosy little guy. And you needed somebody like this. I don't think he's local.

All the reporters and editors interviewed said they followed their professional values and the SPJ code of ethics that says journalists should “afflict the comfortable and comfort the afflicted.” Their job was to represent the readers' interests. The SPJ code of ethics guides reporters to give a voice to the voiceless — something the reporter who covered the homeless woman was attempting to achieve. The following reflects the view of several *Star-Bulletin* staff members, whether they were born here or not, and whether they were Hawaiian or not:

I don't buy this notion that it's because of where you come from that determines how you approach your job. Whether one has news judgment or not doesn't depend on whether you are from here or not from here. It has more to do with how you look at things as a reporter, and that ability to recognize that there is a story there. Secondly, the willingness to go after it, to stick your neck out and make some waves.

To me being local is more a sense of place. Most of the time, to me it's not relevant. If I'm writing on something that's inappropriate that shouldn't be done, it's just wrong, whether you're from here or not.

Several staff members said they believed the *Star-Bulletin* should do more aggressive reporting, as reflected in this comment:

There is a tendency not to do in-your-face kind of journalism; not to be real aggressive; not to make waves unnecessarily to the point where you stand out. My feeling is that for whatever the reasons are, the media in general here have just been a little too laid back, and that's why we've had things persist for years.

Award-winning columnist Rob Perez said he believes that the community is best served when the newspaper aggressively pursues its watchdog role:

To me the most important function of the newspaper is its watchdog function, and if we had been more aggressive as a watchdog I don't think the Bishop Estate controversy would have gone on so long. (Other reporters) did stories early on that later led to resignation of the trustees, but I guess as an institution I don't think we took people to task consistently and often enough to prompt change.

Perez continues:

That's the sort of thing I try to do with my column. I try to be sort of in your face, and I try to make waves. To me the perfect example is the column I did on country club memberships that legislators had been accepting for years. That's not something that's new. It had been going on for who knows how long. I'm sure we did some reporting early on. I'm assuming that we've written about it in the past,

but my thinking is that if they were continuing to do it, then every single year they file those disclosures you need to pound away at it and raise the issue again and again and again until they stop. Whether you are from here or from the mainland, the fact that legislators were getting this privilege was just wrong.

Another former editor said many of the *Star-Bulletin*'s reporters were "headline-grabbers" and did gutsy stories, and said the notion that local staff aren't aggressive is "conventional thinking."

(Sports columnist) Bill Kwon was from here. He didn't pull any punches. Pierre Bowman was from here and distinguished himself as an entertainment and feature writer. No one ever accused him of being shy. He died of cancer while with the *Star-Bulletin* in 1986. He had written bravely about his condition.

For one former staff member, local means that stories should be geared to the average reader, and in Hawai'i that used to mean "the Kalihi housewife." Where did this phrase come from? Reporters across America have been told to write for the "typical" man or woman on the street. Former *Star-Bulletin* Editor Riley Allen first used the phrase to explain to reporters who their readers were. According to one former staff member, "It was the idea of — make it simple and make it direct." *Star-Bulletin* reporters in the 1950s and 1960s were told to write for "the Kalihi housewife," although that's not so true today, according to several interviews with long-time *Star-Bulletin* staff members. Because of

changing readership habits and falling circulation of afternoon newspapers, “the Kalihi housewife” doesn’t necessarily read the paper anymore. Writing for her means writing for what news people construct as the “ordinary person.” At United Press International for example, journalists are told to write for the Kansas City mailman. The construct reflects the values that drive writing: be direct, don’t use difficult language, and write about pocketbook issues that affect everyone, such as death and taxes.

The notion of writing for the common person came from a desire by publishers to appeal to a mass audience to sell newspapers and advertising, but also because the background and education level of journalists until the 1950s tended to reflect that of working people on the U.S. mainland. Since the 1970s, members of the leading news media across America have increasingly moved in intellectual and professional circles (Bates 1995: 30). They have been criticized by media critic James Fallows and others (Lichter, Rothman and Lichter 1986) for being removed from the public, even arrogant (Henry III 1992: 18). Yet there is also evidence that journalists are less like elites and more like the people they cover (Weaver and Wilhoit 1991, Fedler 2000). In Weaver and Wilhoit’s (1996) thorough study of American journalists their portrait diverges from the popular, critical view. And they noted that journalists in 1992 had become more conservative, acting mostly as disseminators of information. They were less adversarial and engaged in more interpretive/investigative functions, particularly those who worked for large, publicly traded corporations (1996: 141). The authors note that the disseminator function was a meshing of two key roles: “getting information to the public quickly, and

avoiding stories with unverifiable ‘facts’” (Weaver and Wilhoit 1996: 138). They concluded that a majority of journalists are “pluralistic.” They follow several roles – as disseminator, interpreter or sometimes adversary. However, journalists’ professional values “are typified by a sense of altruism and desire for autonomy” (Weaver and Wilhoit 1991: 217). These notions derive from a liberal, Christian ethic — particularly the sense of altruism and independence that was supposed to give newspapers credibility.

The situation in Hawai‘i was somewhat different from that on the mainland. As part of an imported institution in Hawai‘i, the staff of newspapers in the early years tended to represent the established class — the missionary and commercial interests. That began to change with the rise of a local professional class — the descendants of the plantation workers. After World War II, as the descendants of Asian American plantation workers gained power and economic status, newspapers began to hire them in greater numbers; however, by that time they were also members of the establishment and were well versed in American news culture. Chapin (1996:233) frames the history of the *Star-Bulletin* within the context of a crusade since annexation for statehood and equality by owner-publisher Wallace Rider Farrington, his son and wife. Chapin interprets the hiring of non-whites by editor Riley Allen as a response to the growing power of *Nisei*, who thought statehood would give them equality with whites (1996: 234).

In the multicultural Hawai‘i colonial context, the notions of truth, objectivity, fairness and balance are contested and problematic because newspapers were an imported institution dominated by *haole* (Euro-American) men, as they were on the mainland.

They brought institutionalized journalistic values and practices in defining news. Buck (1996) points out that because newspapers were an imported Western form, newspapers in Hawai'i reflected Western definitions of what was considered to be an event. It was just a matter of time before newspapers and another imported institution — the legal system — came to influence the values and culture of the people of Hawai'i. Merry (2000) conducted a detailed analysis of the way in which the cultural power of law changed the culture of the Hawaiians in Hilo until they adopted the imported values and culture, which enabled them to join the establishment class. By the end of the plantation era, the descendants of plantation owners were well entrenched in the establishment and held powerful positions. The *Star-Bulletin* reflected the new establishment in its news content and in its staff membership, which came to be dominated by Hawai'i-born descendants of Asian Americans or long-time *kama'aina* journalists. It reflected the local culture in which Euro-Americans occupied a minority position (about 20 percent) and where Asian American descendants of plantation workers had gained power and economic status. The *Star-Bulletin's* support for statehood illustrates how the newspaper reflected the established classes' interests, which included the new professional Asian Americans who were born and raised in Hawai'i.

In more recent times there have been more conscious efforts by Simonds and Shapiro to hire individuals from underrepresented, such as Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders. Also, in October 2002 the *Star-Bulletin* began running a column in Hawaiian.

Local Identity

Statehood and other factors, such as *Nisei* support in World War II and the hiring of Asians in the 1930s helped define the *Star-Bulletin's* local identity. Interviewees were asked to define local identity, and whether the *Star-Bulletin* was the local paper. Most described the newspaper in relation to the *Advertiser*. They said the *Star-Bulletin* was, and is, more local than the *Advertiser*. This is explored more in the narratives after a discussion of the concept of local and its complexities.

“Local” has been a contested concept among academics and the popular press. Okamura (1980, 1994, 2000), Kubo (1997), and Rosa (1999, 2000) have described local in terms of class, and in relation to outsiders and Native Hawaiians. Trask (2000) positions Asian Americans as distinct from Hawaiians, who struggled against colonization. She says they are settlers just like the *haoles*, and now occupy prominent and powerful positions. She refers particularly to Japanese Americans, who she says obstruct the Hawaiian sovereignty movement and land claims issues. Her analysis highlights the complexities of local identity.

Rosa's study proposes that the Massie case in 1931 provided a language and a foundation for the expression of local identity, which lay in the everyday lives of those who experienced it firsthand in the 1930s. The case involved the alleged rape in Waikiki of Thalia Massie, a Navy officer's wife, and the subsequent murder of Joseph Kahahawai by Thomas Massie, Mrs. Massie and two Navy men. His studies focus on how narrative has been used to explain local identity in Hawaii. He sites *Star-Bulletin* stories as well as

a 1981 piece by *Star-Bulletin* reporter Lois Taylor that revisited the Massie case and its role in the expression of local identity as a cultural identity continually in the making (Rosa 2000: 100).

At the time of the Massie incident, Rosa explains, locals — Asian Americans and Hawaiians — had a common identity because they both suffered oppression by the *haoles*. In a collection of essays in *Amerasia Journal* in 2000, Okamura, Rosa, Fujikane and Trask recognize that local identity is evolving because many descendents of Asian American plantation workers are now part of the establishment and are no longer economically oppressed.

Kubo (1997) notes in her dissertation that “The components that create cultural identities are multiple and complex, always in flux, and undergo constant transformation”(1997: 2). She discusses local identity through a “landscape marked by specific signs: language, music, theater, literature and food.” Focusing on these practices enables us to understand culture as an expression of certain meanings and values in art, learning, institutions and behavior. An examination of certain signs and narratives of the *Star-Bulletin* participants in this study will help explain their understanding of local within the current context.

Kubo (1997: 8) also describes local identity from an external point: “Identities actually come from the outside, they are the way in which we are recognized and then come to step into the place of the recognitions which others give us. Without the others, there is no self, there is no self-recognition.” Says Kubo, “In a broader sense, local is

merely a metaphor for what it means to participate in a community and what the members of that community might find useful” (p. 6).

Okamura also notes the importance of external forces on defining local identity: “It has been the presence of either dominant or outsider groups in opposition to the people of Hawai‘i that has given salience and meaning to the notion of local throughout its development” (1980: 35). It might be that some people say the *Star-Bulletin* is the “local” paper simply because of its underdog position since 1993 vis a vis dominant Gannett or because of support for people of Asian ancestry. And, it is likely that the staff and their newspaper have created their local identity in opposition to the dominant mainland U.S. — as a way to distinguish themselves and feel superior.

Okamura’s study discusses how the definition of “local” is a product of a historical period of blatant racism. He suggests:

Local has become a symbol of the common identity of people who appreciate the quality and style of life in the islands and who therefore attempt to maintain control over the future of Hawai‘i and its communities. This shared lifestyle and its associated behaviors, values, and norms are popularly referred to as ‘local’ culture (1980: 119).

He says that “local” is increasingly used to refer to people born and raised in Hawai‘i, but that its meaning is more subtle and can extend beyond this (1980: 119).

Okamura examines the social processes that resulted in local culture, and notes that local culture is derived not just from a sharing of diverse cultures, but more importantly from the imposing of American institutions, which would include newspapers, on Hawaiians and on the immigrant plantation groups through armed revolution and the penal sanctions of the contract labor system. The concept of “local” was also created as a way for people who identified with Hawai‘i, whether born here or not, to distinguish themselves from mainlanders. The concept of local as defined by Okamura and Kubo appears to be what *Star-Bulletin* staff members mean when they use the term local. Identification with “local” is a form of resistance to imported institutions, values and accompanying outside pressures. *Star-Bulletin* employees refer to the imposition of business pressures as well as aggressive-style journalism.

The question of how local is defined through the journalistic lens employed by the *Star-Bulletin* staff is analyzed in the narratives that follow. An analysis of local by Ferguson and Turnbull (1999) could be applied here. In their study of the semiotics of the military in Hawai‘i, they refer to the production of self-referential discourse. What self-referential discourse defining localness might emerge from the narratives drawn from the interviews with *Star-Bulletin* staff? In the narratives, there is little, if any, recognition of Trask’s concept that Asian Americans, especially Japanese, have been colonized, are now part of the establishment and don’t share in Native Hawaiian claims of oppression.

In the interviews, the staff at the *Star-Bulletin* reflected the complexity of multiculturalism and multiple definitions of “local,” kama‘aina, and mainlander in their

state. For example, a reporter of Filipino heritage might look local but be from California and have mainland values and characteristics. Or a Euro-American *haole* might have been born and raised here and act “local.”

Below is a combination of narratives from *Star-Bulletin* staff members about what it means to be local. They reflect differing viewpoints but share a few things in common: that local means you don’t exhibit the stereotypical mainland aggressiveness and that you have an attitude that you care about Hawai‘i. They also reflect a sense of their position vis-à-vis the outsider, or someone who is not from Hawai‘i:

The definitive local is you’re born and raised here. But it’s progressed from “born and raised here,” to, “you care about Hawai‘i.” It’s demeanor. I know locals who live here and they don’t care about Hawai‘i. I think it’s definitely more of an attitude than being born and raised here.

If I’m in San Francisco and start working there, I’m not local yet because of the way I react to things, and my loyalties. I don’t define local by whether you were born here or not born here. It’s your attitude. I’m sure there are many people at the *Star-Bulletin* now, who probably don’t even know where Mokuleia is. They have a job; they are reporters, but they haven’t gone local yet in their attitude. Their attitude is they’re just journalists doing their job so they can get a better job and go off to the mainland. (One staff member), for example, had been here six years before I could get him to eat local food, like noodles. All those years he was sticking to hamburgers. It’s not the food, it’s attitude about the food. You can stay

here for 50 years and never be local, I don't think. I don't think Doris Duke ever became local! (Note: The heiress owned a mansion in Honolulu).

It makes you sensitive to how you say things. You can say things...people in a small towns can have fights. But here they don't want you to fight dirty.

I know people from the mainland who are more local than locals. It's a feeling for the land. A feeling for the people. It's all in the heart, this aloha thing.

Another staff member said:

It means having a tie to Hawai'i, whether it's being born and raised here, caring about the place, respecting its values and not imposing your previously gathered notions about what this place should be. "Well, that's not how we do it on the mainland" attitude. How valid is that? There are reasons, and take it for what it's worth to you and not what it 's worth to several other people. We're the only state in the union with a centralized school system and that means it's bad. Well, it may be, but not for that reason. There's a real big problem with wanting outsiders to make Hawai'i into something they feel more comfortable with. If you don't have a comfort level here, then why are you here? You need to look at each thing and if you are going to change it, what value would that have?

Someone (from the mainland) asked me what a local guy meant when he said, "I don't tink (think) so, but..." And the "but" bothered him so much; he didn't know

what the guy was saying. So he asked me. “You speak Pidgin,” he said. I told him the guy is saying he’s disagreeing with you. He doesn’t think what you are saying is true. And the “but” gives him a way of saying he respects your opinion.

“Whatever you think, but that’s just what I think.” It gives him a way to save face because you disagree with him and not saying he’s the ultimate authority.

I think we (in Hawai‘i) might evaluate somebody with a little more sensitivity. Maybe it does come from being an isolated community. There’s no subtlety in America.

One staff member also explained how being Asian and a local woman were additional factors in her attitude:

Local style is you are born and raised in Hawai‘i and you don’t toot your own horn. You are a woman and you’re Asian; that factors into it as well. You don’t want to be arrogant or proud in front of other people who have been there longer. It’s a lot of cultural things.

(Local is) not just passing through waiting to get transferred back to the “real world.” There’s a cultural gap between mainland and here — a sensitivity, a humility sort of, that more *Star-Bulletin* people can deal with living on that local side of the divide. You have a good reporter from the mainland who lands here,

heads out and starts interrogating people in what would be a normal mainland interaction, and wonder why people clam up. The *Star-Bulletin* had a higher percentage of people who communicate on all of the body language — the history; people who knew what to say and how to say it, and the stories reflect that.

An examination of the journalists' comments above reveals that those who were born here were more opposed to mainland-style aggressiveness in reporting because they felt it alienated sources. They said that being sensitive to local culture and having a caring attitude distinguished them from their colleagues who were not born here, whether they were from the mainland or elsewhere. But at the same time they didn't feel that only those born here could have that attitude. And, none of them talked about whether Hawaiians fit into their concept of local. Local seemed to have been created as an identifier that distinguished them from outsiders and Hawaiians. As a group, self-identified locals had claims to being part of the underclass at one time, although it could be argued that they had been colonized and were now occupying elite positions as journalists.

The interviewees' backgrounds were diverse, which reflects the complexity of Hawai'i and the *Star-Bulletin's* newsroom. Of those who discussed the meaning of local, six were from the mainland, three were Hawaiian, three were Asian-American, two were born on the mainland but raised here, two I'm not sure about (possibly Hawaiian/Asian-

American), and three were of different ethnicities from outside United States. As Kubo (1997) would say, these journalists are using local as a metaphor for what it means to them to be part of their community, and what it means to be part of the community of journalists. For some, it simply means being hooked into the community as all good journalists should be; for others, local is an important metaphor that distinguishes them from the “other” — their mainland colleagues and their aggressive reporting style. It empowers them because they have a stronger sensitivity to the community that can only be acquired by living in Hawai‘i a long time or by being born and raised here.

The Save Our *Star-Bulletin* group labeled the *Star-Bulletin* the “local” paper to trigger an emotional response and thus influence a judge and the community to save the paper. The *Star-Bulletin* had been considered the “local” paper by staff because of its historical relationship with the community — an intersection of local community and historical events about the organization. Staff members said its editors showed a respect for *Nisei* during World War II and support for equality through statehood. The *Star-Bulletin* was also considered to be the paper that had more local staff when compared with its competitor, the *Advertiser*. Former editor Riley Allen, as noted earlier, had hired more locals in greater numbers during and after World War II.

The perspective that the *Star-Bulletin* was more local persisted among staff members, even though that identity has shifted over time. Comments below reflect that attitude:

The *Star-Bulletin* has always been the local paper. And that is really true. When the *Advertiser* was dying (in the 1960s), it was dying in part because of the way it had acted during the '40s and '50s. It did not have the support of the local community. It was a racist paper. The *Star-Bulletin* fought martial law and censorship in World War II. The *Advertiser* censors were *Advertiser* editors. The *Advertiser* editorialized that everyone was paying too much attention to the 442nd (regiment in World War II) fighting in Europe. During the war they did that. The big thing about the *Star-Bulletin* not allowing the word Jap in a headline was never forgotten by the local community. It wasn't until (Buck) Buchwach came out...Buchwach was the moderating influence at the *Advertiser*, and of course (George) Chaplin.

During Riley Allen's era, the paper was more local because he really knew the community well, and would attend several luncheons and dinners each day.

The *Star-Bulletin* is the local paper because it has local editors and writers — people born and raised here. And, staff members stay on longer at the *Star-Bulletin*. A lot of the mainland leadership went to the *Advertiser*.

The main difference that I could see with the two papers is that we had more oldtimers. It's reflected even in the news stories. They are very, very local. ...

The *Star-Bulletin*, the community, they favored the *Star-Bulletin* over the *Advertiser*...witness Save Our *Star-Bulletin*. All these people got together to form a group to save the newspaper. I don't think that would have happened if we were the *Advertiser*.

It's hard to put a finger on it. It started with Riley, when, he was for the small people — the Japanese, the Chinese, Filipino. He loved them. He was out there for them. He'd go out and pick up a cause, for the Japanese people — not using derogatory terms. For the Chinese he went to bat for them if he had to; the Filipinos out in Kalihi or anywhere, or the Hawaiians.

Several former longtime staff members commented about their somewhat differing perspectives on the diversity newsroom of the Riley Allen era and the numbers of local people:

Our newsroom, our staff, we had every nationality you can think of. We had mainland people and local people. We were one family.

It was mostly a "white" newsroom, but not entirely. Shurei Hirozawa was in business. Harriet Gee was in the society section and there was Sarah Park, Tomi Kaizawa and Larry Nakatsuka, who was sent to the Japanese consulate on Dec. 7, 1941 (when Pearl Harbor was bombed). There was Bill Gee, Harriet's husband,

Ken Misumi and photographer Amos Chun and Al Yamauchi; Lou Jo Hollingsworth, Ah Jook Ku and Margaret Kam.

Star-Bulletin editor Frank Bridgewater commented that being the local paper is about an attitude about what's newsworthy, something Perez talked about as well:

Rightly or wrongly, people look at it that way (that the *Star-Bulletin* is the local paper). But I think a lot of it rightly. It struck me yesterday before our department head meeting yesterday morning. I walk to work on occasion, when I walk in I like to see how the two papers play on the street in the boxes. It struck me, which I mentioned at the meeting, that a lot of times people think of us as the more local paper because of our local investors, among other things. It's interesting that yesterday we had a big lead story and a big three- or four-column photo on the Hawaiians marching and protesting challenges to their rights. And the *Advertiser* didn't have anything on A1 at all on that. It was on their local section — their second section — and it was their lead story in that section. When people think about us as being local, I think this is why. It was the big event of the weekend. There were hundreds out marching in an all-night vigil. We had that on Sunday and on Monday, The *Advertiser* on Monday had preview of a security summit coming Wednesday. They had a little photo here. I found it hard to believe that they didn't put that photo on Page 1.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁶ Interview with Frank Bridgewater, Nov. 18, 2003.

One of the reasons given for saving the paper was that it served local community interests through its award-winning and influential stories. In 2000, for example, the *Star-Bulletin* took the lion's share of the Hawai'i Publishers Association Pa'i awards, winning first place in many categories and sweeping newspaper design categories, first-place in editorial writing, and seven other categories. This was the year that Rob Perez took first place in two categories for his influential story, "What Price Paradise?" on high prices in the state. Rick Daysog won for a story "How Bishop Estate Lobbied the Clinton White House."¹⁰⁷ As explained earlier, Shapiro and Chang recognized the importance of the Broken Trust essay. Stories by Perez on high food, gas and car prices in the state also resulted in state legal action or lower prices for consumers. Reporters and editors of diverse ancestry, both local and not, produced these stories because they were following their journalistic role as they saw it to serve their community and act as a watchdog on the powerful.

Is the *Star-Bulletin* or the *Advertiser* the more "local" paper? That concept has bounced back and forth as ownership changed hands, particularly since David Black purchased the *Star-Bulletin*. Being "local" has been used to market both newspapers — evidence of the continuing colonizing of Hawai'i. Black got local people to invest in the paper, and The *Advertiser* created a mission statement that's focused on local readers. It's engraved in Koa wood, and hangs outside the newsroom. This represents a conscious

construction of identity in which local culture and imported business values have been commodified in support of commercial interests. It is further evidence of mobility of identity as it is constructed and reconstructed over time:

It's a battle for who's more local. The *Advertiser* would say that when they were owned by Twigg-Smith and the *Star-Bulletin* was Gannett. They had convinced a lot of people that they were local and the *Star-Bulletin* wasn't. I remember a Hawai'i Newspaper Agency tour guide giving a tour in the News Building who said, "This side is the *Advertiser*, our locally owned paper, and over there is the *Star-Bulletin*, which is owned by Gannett, a mainland company." I froze in my tracks overhearing that. The *Advertiser* claimed for years that it was the local newspaper. Now the shoe may be on the other foot. Now the *Star-Bulletin* has the illusion of local ownership and board members. It's like a product endorsement. The perception is that these local leaders support this struggling paper, and it's assumed they're also doing it financially. It's a very clever move by David Black to come up with that. Whether it's effective is another matter. However, very few decisions or acts cut across in a uniform way because we are a diverse community. There are no negatives with a local board. It won't drive people away. You might get a shrug of indifference from someone from elsewhere.

¹⁰⁷ Mary Adamski (2000). "*Star-Bulletin* takes home lion's share of journalism's Pa'i awards." Thursday, April 13, 2000, A-9.

The *Advertiser's* mission statement, which was adopted in the mid-1990s after Gannett took over, reads:

To reflect a love and understanding of this place and its people. To honor Hawai'i's ethnic, cultural and social diversity. To cherish the land and the sea. To perpetuate the qualities of aloha. To be Hawai'i's newspaper.

One former *Star-Bulletin* employee commented that:

The *Advertiser's* mission statement is just dripping with local appeal. (Longtime columnist) Bob Krauss helps their image of being rooted locally. That comes across very big a local, hometown, old *kama'aina* (long-time Hawai'i resident who wasn't born here). (Entertainment writer) Wayne Harada has been around a long time. Some of the people in sports and other writers, photographers and artists are from here. You can make a strong case (for the *Advertiser*) for being local.

However, another staff member explained from his perspective that the perception of which paper was more local changed when Gannett purchased the *Advertiser*:

A lot of local people left when Gannett took over, or local people played a greater role then than they do today. The *Advertiser* had been a local paper, locally owned much more so than the *Star-Bulletin* certainly when (Thurston) Twigg-Smith owned it. I think they lost a lot on that. Gannett always brings people through to

Hawai'i, and they did that when they owned the *Star-Bulletin*, and they did that when they bought the *Advertiser*. And they probably have more people now who have stayed there longer than they have in a while. Constant turnover of staff is a bigger problem here than anywhere because they come from an alien culture, and it takes a while to get acclimated.

A former *Star-Bulletin* editor said that the newspaper:

...wants to appeal to people who have grown up in the islands and who feel they are part of its history. You're reflecting those traditions and that you're part of the local scene.

Since the sale of the *Star-Bulletin*, the *Advertiser* has appropriated some of the *Star-Bulletin's* "local" symbols that identify it with Hawai'i as a place and a people. For example, the *Star-Bulletin* used to have a hibiscus on its Friday edition; the day the *Star-Bulletin* changed hands in March 2001 the *Advertiser* displayed the hibiscus prominently, and it is included in all section headers. "Hawai'i's newspaper" is displayed on its front page.

Staff members at the *Star-Bulletin* have their own definitions of what constitutes local and sometimes define the "localness" of the *Star-Bulletin* in relation to *Advertiser*, saying the *Star-Bulletin* crusaded for the causes of local people in the past, served local

readers better and had more local staff. The paper's management used the label "local" to promote its importance.

In an attempt to appeal to as large an audience as possible, *Star-Bulletin* staff may be contributing to the multicultural ideal rather than discuss in public Hawai'i's differences, racism and the meaning of "local." Local means having a certain sensitivity or a non-aggressive attitude for some; for others, being local is whether you were born here or identify with Hawai'i or speak Pidgin. It distinguishes you from outsiders. In contrast, when someone says she is Hawaiian, she means she has Hawaiian ancestry. Discussion about racism, local and Hawaiian identities are complex and generally not covered in any depth by the newspapers. In 2003, a discussion of what it means to be Hawaiian emerged in both daily papers over the admission of a non-Hawaiian to Kamehameha Schools, which requires that its students be of Hawaiian ancestry rather than having been brought up culturally Hawaiian.¹⁰⁸

Generally, journalism values dominate among staff members at the *Star-Bulletin*. One case illustrates their support for First Amendment values. Trask (2000) and Fujikane (2000) contend that this case was framed by both dailies as a censorship issue rather than a racial one. Lois-Ann Yamanaka and her novel, *Blu's Hanging*, were criticized as being racist for portraying Filipino men as sexual predators, and her award by the Association

¹⁰⁸ Many stories covered Kauai seventh-grader Brayden Mohica-Cummings' efforts to overturn Kamehameha Schools' policy of giving preference to students of native Hawaiian ancestry. He was initially accepted into the school but later turned away when he couldn't document native Hawaiian ancestry. He was later allowed to stay. The school and its supporters had stuck by their belief that documented Hawaiian ancestry was the determining factor for acceptance. They settled with the student and allowed him to stay because they did not want to risk losing a court case and setting precedent.

for Asian American's Studies was rescinded. Trask contends that the daily newspapers portrayed the dispute as a case of censorship and violation of Yamanaka's First Amendment rights, which reflected their professional values above any cultural ones. Trask commented that "The term 'censorship,' like the term 'political correctness,' was used to foreclose a meaningful discussion of racism and literature (Trask 2000: 181).

The imported professional and occupational culture and values of American journalism intersect in interesting ways with local culture at the *Star-Bulletin*, as the interviewees have shown. At their nexus, they create a frame or perspective that is by no means uniformly agreed upon by *Star-Bulletin* staff as they conduct their daily jobs. For some, journalism values predominate; there is no difference between good local reporting and just good reporting. For others, storytelling is enhanced if the journalist has local roots or experience. Some of the differences emerged because of the interviewees' diverse backgrounds, as explained earlier. They bring their individual, personal experiences and attributes into the job. Those born and raised here tended to identify strongly with being local, and that this brought positive attributes to the job. There was a sense of loyalty to the notion that they are locals, without acknowledging that local distinguished them and their political power, particularly of Asian Americans, from Hawaiians.

Longtime staff members who weren't born here also saw the benefits that long experience in Hawai'i can bring culturally to the job, but saw it as less of a big deal.

However, this is a generalization; there was no consensus. One thing was clear, however. Staff members had a strong sense that mainlanders and recent transplants were “outsiders” who didn’t share Hawai‘i’s cultural experience and history. Kent’s notion that anybody from the outside would be suspect could be applied here as well as Kubo’s — that local is a product of Hawai‘i’s history.

The previous chapters have shown that the culture of journalism at the *Star-Bulletin* has been shaped to some extent by local values integrated with professional values. External influences, such as ownership and economics, have been expressed through the paper’s leadership to shape the newsroom’s identity and culture. But culture and identity has also been constrained and shaped at the organization level by the imported structure and hierarchy of the newspaper and by everyday workflow routines: reporting, writing, editing, design, printing and distribution. The next chapter shows how these have helped create the *Star-Bulletin*’s culture. It also demonstrates that the construction of identity is reflected in the physical product — the newspaper.

CHAPTER 6
ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND ROUTINES
AT THE *STAR-BULLETIN*: INFLUENCE ON CULTURE

Workflow and structural patterns

Journalists are in an occupational culture that is defined by its values and its routines (Trice and Beyer 1993) for producing media. Its routines in particular have dictated workflow and, to some degree, the structure of the organization to accomplish that work. Throughout its history, the *Star-Bulletin* has been organized in a structural/functional way that is hierarchical, which is standard in the industry, although there were subtle variations when staff members compared the *Star-Bulletin* with the *Advertiser* or when ownership is considered. This structure emphasizes a vertical top-down flow of authority, but information also flows upward (Redmond and Trager 1998).

The overall routine of producing a different newspaper every day — from reporting to distribution to the public — is an assembly line. Duties are standardized and routinized so the paper can get to readers on time. But newspapers employ creative people who have a lot of control over their work, and who typically initiate and develop their story ideas, editing and presentation. They are professionals, and many do the job for the love of it. They consider themselves to have a higher calling than just receiving a paycheck. Redmond and Trager (2004) say newspapers have an environment unlike most others. “So you have factory workers who are really not factory workers, laboring under tight production line schedules, but who see their work as more than a mere production” (Redmond and Trager 2004: 57). The atmosphere in the newsroom might be tense and

exciting or calm and friendly, depending on the stories of the day. Redmond and Trager say that because of this, newspapers have a kind of split personality, a combination of formal and informal structures:

According to Redmond and Trager:

“Media work is a combination of accepted technique and loosely defined art brought together to convey subjective emotion and meaning. Because of that, media professionals tend to see their work as their own, even though the copyright is owned by the newspaper (1998: 23).

Media organizations are a blend of machine and professional organizations. Parts of them are relatively rigid and highly controlled, but other parts are very flexible, with the quality of the work very much in the hands of the individual (Redmond and Trager 1998). Mintzberg (1989) also calls this a blending of machine and professional types of organizations. The *Star-Bulletin* is a blending of these two, although attributes of one — the professional — may predominate because of the wide latitude and minimal supervision given employees at the paper. Control over reporters’ stories is not direct; journalists learn organizational policy informally, although individual editors have control over final copy.

This minimal supervision and consequent freedom is a result of the flatter hierarchical structure of the recent *Star-Bulletin* because it has a relatively smaller staff size and circulation when compared with the *Advertiser*. Johnstone (1976) studied

newspaper organizations with different staff sizes to determine whether increasing media monopolies and the centralization of newspapers would have a negative impact on journalists because of bureaucratization. He found that it is more difficult for journalists to realize autonomy or independence in a large organizational setting because fewer personnel share in key editorial decisions. He noted that journalists seem happier when they work in smaller organizations. With an editorial staff of about 105 and a reported daily circulation of 65,000 in 2003, the *Star-Bulletin* could be considered a medium to small newspaper, particularly compared with the *Advertiser*, which had about 140 newsroom staff and a daily circulation of 142,000.¹⁰⁹ Staff members at the *Star-Bulletin* felt less alienated than they might have at the *Advertiser* because they had more control over the final newspaper product.

In newspapers, news and editorial functions are typically physically and functionally separated from business functions such as advertising, circulation and distribution. At smaller papers these can be more tightly related. News and editorial staff members are organized in a pyramid structure, with the publisher at the top, and copy clerks at the bottom in terms of pay and responsibility. The publisher typically reports to a board of directors or owners, oversees the editorial operations and has contact with the public. The editor is in charge of the news-editorial side and generally leaves the day-to-day operation to the managing editor, although on some smaller papers the editor will run everything. The editorial page editor oversees letters to the editor, editorials and opinion

¹⁰⁹ Audit Bureau of Circulations, 9/30/2003. <http://www.accessabc.com>

pieces. Reporters usually report to the city editor or assistant city editor and receive their assignments from that person. Some experienced reporters have their own beats, such as health, science, education or government, and are largely free to report on topics as they see fit. Section editors report to the managing editor or an assistant managing editor. These include the news editor (who is usually in charge of the copy editors and national and foreign news), business, features and sports editors. Larger papers have foreign and national editors, although this is not the case at the *Star-Bulletin* or the *Advertiser*. Photo editors and graphics editors also report to the managing editor or an assistant managing editor. Under Black, the *Star-Bulletin* is a relatively flat structure. However, Black renegotiated the union contract before he took over so there are more non-union positions among low-level managers who do not receive overtime pay.

Subcultures

The hierarchical and functional divisions of the *Star-Bulletin* have created some subcultures at the paper, according to staff. Departments that are separated the most at newspapers, both physically and by production, are the editorial pages, sports, features and photography/graphics, which is the case at the *Star-Bulletin*. The divisions have been created for functional reasons, but they are also symbolic manifestations of the status of these departments in the culture of the newsroom in which public affairs news is the central focus, carries the most prestige and appears in the A (front) section of the paper.

Sports departments have developed a distinct subculture. Staff members often work late because they must wait for games to finish before they can finish their stories and print scores. Their language and jargon is often hard to understand by non-fans. Until recently, sports was usually a male-only zone, and there are few women sports editors, although the *Star-Bulletin* did have one.

Features reporters have a reputation for writing “soft” news. In the old days, features was the “women’s” or “society” section. Photographers and graphics artists are the “visual” people whose work was, until recently, usually considered as an afterthought — an add-on to a story, as in “we need a photo or graphic to go with that story,” rather than as the central focus of a story. That has changed somewhat in the past 25 years with the advent of computers, better color reproduction and use of graphics on which *USA TODAY* made its reputation. Photos and graphics now dominate many newspapers today, including the *Star-Bulletin*, which has a history of strong design and distinctive use of visuals. It could be argued, however, that visual journalists still are not on equal footing with “word” journalists.

One staff member’s comment illustrates the common perception that “sports is in their own little world.” Features staff members were “seen as the prima donnas,” another staff member commented. She joked:

I think there was some making fun of them, like, look at these guys like (XX reporter), who gets to go fly around and interview celebrities, and go to spas and stuff like that.

As the comment suggested, features has second-class status. However, features reporters usually work daytime hours and have more flexible work schedules than, say sports reporters, or those covering cops or City Hall for the news section. An editor's comments show that there were real differences felt between staff in the different sections:

I remember one time, one of the guys in the city desk, doing copy on the rim, walked back to the features section and pounded his fist on the desk and said, "There's too much goddamn laughter over here." We were cheerful, happy and irreverent. We're the guys who shine the flashlights in the dark corner for people who can't do it for themselves. You know the line, afflict the comfortable and comfort the afflicted. Wish we could actually do that every day. You know, little things, like running the TV guide every day. Where else would you go? The newspaper is where you get your information to deal with your life. It's not just what politicians are crooked. It's how much is that DVD gonna cost you; what sports teams are playing this weekend. Does that new business down the corner have a good deal for you? It's about dealing with life.

Business reporters also work daytime hours, so some people seek out these positions because they need flexible time to take care of family members. The business department had a culture that was physically separated when the *Star-Bulletin* was in the

Advertiser building because for several years it was in a backroom down the hall from the newsroom. Bridgewater, who used to be business editor, reflected on that time:

It was good and bad in a way. People would come back there to escape the newsroom once in a while; play (nerf) basketball. They had to get away for whatever reason, and they could hide out back there. It was closer to the back shop, so in a practical sense it was good, because in those days we were still running back and forth checking pages, checking type when it was outputting, making sure it was on the page and all. So that worked all right. But at the same time we were certainly away and to ourselves more.

There were people in the business section who had been there longer than many others. A higher percentage of (long-time) people were in that department than in any other. For a lot of the time it was a real veteran crew.¹¹⁰

At that time more than today, business departments in newspapers were seen as areas for specialists. Since the 1980s, business news has been considered more central in importance, and often appears on Page 1. Business news is no longer just profit/loss statements and the stock market, but stories about central issues in people's lives like their income, jobs or lack of them, working conditions and the price of homes and other essentials. In the Restaurant Row *Star-Bulletin* newsroom, the business department is next to the city desk, reflecting its importance.

¹¹⁰ Interview with Frank Bridgewater, Nov. 18, 2003.

In the past, the *Star-Bulletin* has had bureaus on the neighbor islands, in Washington D.C., and had Capitol and City Hall reporters, who worked in the bureau at the Capitol. About 20 years ago the *Star-Bulletin* had about five or six reporters covering the governor, Legislature and City Hall. Now there are two. The reduction is symbolic of the change in newsroom culture everywhere — less emphasis on government reporting and especially recording the details of government decision-making, and more emphasis on the effects of governments on people. The Capitol bureau is physically separated from the main newsroom so its members can have close contact with government representatives. One reporter said that returning to the newsroom after being outside was like “coming in from the cold.”

Certain factors create subcultures at the newspaper, according to Trice and Beyer: physical location and geography, such as the reporters in bureaus or others who don't work in the newsroom, and workflow and routines, technology, hierarchy and unionization. There can also be divisions based on gender, ethnicity or age. The newsroom as a physical space where people form relationships also helps to create the culture of a community.

Physical space and location

Newsrooms thrive on communication across an open newsroom. The frenzied, emotional atmosphere portrayed in Hollywood movies is not typical of most newsrooms, but the strong personalities are, as the interviewees' comments show. Before the 1970s

ushered in quieter technology, newsrooms were noisier because of teletype machines, typewriters and telephones. Since that time, newsrooms have grown quieter, and the *Star-Bulletin* is no exception. The *Star-Bulletin's* newsroom underwent several symbolic changes in buildings and in the degree of openness in the newsroom. Symbolically, management offices were always “upstairs” where the furnishings were nicer and the noise level lower — evidence of the power structure.

The *Star-Bulletin* moved several times with changes in ownership, management and technology. The first significant move in recent history came in 1961 when the *Star-Bulletin* moved out of its Merchant Street building into the *Advertiser* News Building after the Joint Operating Agreement was established. The *Star-Bulletin* newsroom occupied the Diamond Head (east) side of the building's second-floor and the *Advertiser* newsroom was in the 'Ewa (west) side.¹¹¹ Lyle Nelson recalled that move:

When we moved into the *Advertiser* building — that was sort of traumatic. It was built in 1929 and had a big fountain and garden in the downstairs. It was open at that time. You could look down into the parking lot from the men's urinals. We had an open newsroom. You could see across.¹¹²

It was probably traumatic partly because everyone thought of the “green building” as the *Advertiser* building. “Even for the years while we were there the cab drivers and people

¹¹¹ In Hawai'i, people use geographic locations or landmarks for directions because the mountains and ocean prevent a simple grid system of streets, hence, the Diamond Head landmark (approximately east) is one direction and the opposite is 'Ewa (approximately west).

¹¹² Interview with Lyle Nelson, Feb. 2, 2004.

would say, Oh, the *Advertiser* building,” a staff member said. In a way, the *Star-Bulletin* lost some of its physical identity when it went into the *Advertiser*’s space. That move perhaps also created a fear that the *Advertiser* was somehow gaining the upper hand.

Another staff member commented on the newsroom in the News Building:

We were like an old newspaper — huge with no walls. You had this newsroom that was open to everybody; a newsdesk where all of them were facing each other talking. We had no cubicles. And also, there was the clatter of typewriters, which I liked.

Staff members, particularly those who started working before the 1980s, seemed to like the open, noisy newsroom. It was exciting, and represented the time and competitive pressures they felt to meet deadlines. Communication was open because the space was open. Everyone would know if an exciting story was breaking. The newsroom was remodeled in 1976 and again in 1984. A former editor commented:

In ’76 they covered up the windows, and the staff was absolutely furious. The decision had something to do with the air conditioning. And I told Gialanella that there was going to be a lot of staff unhappiness for covering the windows in Hawai‘i. He told me to stick to what’s important and let him worry about the building. Sure enough, eight years later, they renovated the newsroom and opened

up the windows to great applause in the newsroom. Bill Cox was the new managing editor.

In 1994 Executive Editor John Flanagan had gray-walled cubicles with high walls erected that had overhead bins so the reporters could have more storage space. The cubicles separated parts of the newsroom. City reporters were visually cut off from the City desk; sports and business each had just a single opening in cubicle walls to connect them to rest of the newsroom:

I thought it caused problems. A ghetto of reporters was created. It was like running a gauntlet. The city reporting staff was isolated, which made it a hotbed of rumor mongering and griping. Business and features were self-contained. One way or another they had always been self-contained. It was mainly City that used to be open and suddenly it got walled in. I think that was negative overall. I thought we should have considered putting the editors in the pod with the reporters.

The cubicles changed the working climate and hurt communication, many of the interviewees said. The newsroom became quieter, and had what staff called “an insurance office” atmosphere:

When those barriers went up that was a big mistake. Reporters had their own cubicles. That might work well for an insurance company or a government office,

but my God, it's a newsroom! It needs to be more open. You want to be able to shout ideas across the newsroom. Or hear when someone is really passionate about something. That's how a lot of stories get started and get developed, when you hear reporters talking about something or editors talking to reporters or to editors. The new newsroom is more open now.

Another former staff member commented:

In the old newsroom, we all sat around; we were one big family – on Merchant Street and here. Then they put up walls like an insurance office. I couldn't see. I had to stand on my desk and look around before I could yell. But I'd stand up and yell, "Are you there Helen (Altonn)?" Before you could look out in the newsroom and see everybody. All of a sudden barriers went up.

Change in the *Star-Bulletin's* newsroom reflected change going on all across America — from the noisy newsroom of the old days with mechanical technology to computer-driven newsrooms, a transformation that began in the late 1970s. The physical change also symbolized the encroachment of newspapers' corporate culture into the newsroom which gained significant ground in the 1980s. One longtime staff member described it this way:

We were used to talking all the time but when we started working in cubicles, and you start talking to somebody – and then, shhh! Be quiet. And they started

shushing us up. Then the typewriters disappeared and it became all quiet. It was all computers, and all of a sudden newsmen required quiet. That's the way it became, and I thought the camaraderie, the conversation, the getting to know each other disappeared. I went for years not knowing any of the new hires because they were staying in their little cubicles. You know the back shop? We used to hear the typing machines, and where people at the back go to you and show you the dummy and you talk to people – all that interaction between the backside and the editorial side disappeared. They went off into their own little rooms.

Another staff member commented:

A lot of things got defined by physical space. Reporters row, on the other side of our divide, really defined who hung out together. The copy desk was a whole different world. We were on the opposite of the divide from the City desk reporters. So, physical layout defined interactions — who people talked to.

The open newsroom was essential for effective communication between editors and reporters on deadline, so when the news staff moved to Restaurant Row, few walls were put up:

The cubicles made a big difference the way the atmosphere was. No one could see each other; no one could talk to each other. I really believe a newsroom should be wide open. That's why the newsroom is good the way it is now. Seeing is really

important as a manager. You see what they're doing. You see somebody who doesn't look happy. You need to know what's going on. If it's something to do with the operations of the newsroom or disagreeing with something, you need to know that.

The old newsroom had the classic center of communication — the water cooler and coffee pot — where staff gossiped, built relationships and, in the process, created a newsroom culture:

I like the bustling newsroom of old. You know the old water cooler by the coffee pot near the art department in the old newsroom? Every day Yo (a graphics artist) or Ray Maneki, the first guy in at 4:30 a.m. or 5, got the coffee pot going. We'd plunk down a quarter and hear what was going on. The gregariousness isn't there. We don't have as many warm bodies in here.

Even though there was fondness for the old newsroom, staff said it needed renovating:

It wasn't a really attractive newsroom. The building was falling to pieces. It was a building that needed a lot of repairs, and this environment is a much nicer one.

Another former staff member commented:

Things didn't work in the bathrooms. If the coffee machine were on at the same time as the microwave and the fan it would blow out something. The roof leaked, so certain places it was dangerous to be because of the water. I didn't like the security. The security system — it seemed very unnecessary. I felt threatened. It seemed like that message was to us, not others. It was kind of a cool, old building.

The security system, which involved outside guards and required electronic passes to enter the building and move within it, was set up after the shutdown of the *Star-Bulletin* was announced. Several staff members felt intimidated by the new system, and felt it was there to watch them rather than protect them. Some people also felt that needed repairs were not made to the building because the *Advertiser* was waiting until the *Star-Bulletin* was gone before renovating.

David Black's new *Star-Bulletin* newsroom open, bright and new. The executive offices are still physically upstairs; the editor has an office beside the newsroom and the editorial page editor and photographers are in their own separate offices. But everyone else works out in the newsroom, as they did before. There are several employees who don't work in the building, and that's something that's never happened before. Some columnists and writers and a copy editor work at home. This reduces the paper's costs and spreads reporters and photographers around the island so they are closer to where news may happen. It can also be isolating, particularly for the columnists who, in the

past, often got good ideas from hanging around the newsroom talking to staff to keep informed. Also, the outside workers create a disconnected subculture:

At Restaurant Row, it's completely severed. I go to the paper. I don't know 90 percent of the people.

An "inside" editor commented on how having fewer workers inside the newsroom has affected it:

They're out of sight, out of mind. There's a diminished level of noise because of the out-of-office workers.

An "outside" writer explained the pros and cons of being outside:

At times, I take a walk and come back with ideas. You have to be really disciplined. That's what makes it work for me. I'm at my desk no later than 7:10 in the morning. I hardly ever take a full lunch, but you have a certain amount of freedom. The bad part is you're home five days a week. It gets boring after a while. You don't get the exposure. You don't get the chance to talk to other people.

One staff member called the new newsroom at Restaurant Row "diminished" compared with the old one:

The newsroom is so diminished now at Restaurant Row. It's too depressing.

There needs to be camaraderie — that we're all on this life raft and we're going to keep paddling. There's no attempt to integrate the new people with the old people. No one tells people what's really happening. There's no attempt to integrate the people who work at home with the people who work in the newsroom with the people who work at night with the people who work during the day. It just seems to be on robotic movement. You keep going because this is how we've done it before and this is what we do. But there's no joy.

The “life raft” metaphor is a symbolic example of how some people felt in the new competitive environment — barely afloat and surviving, going through the usual assembly line motions of putting the paper out. And the employees who no longer worked in the newsroom were symbolic of the cutbacks and of changes in technology and how they affected organizational life. Older staff members expressed a nostalgia for the “old days” — the newsroom romanticized in black-and-white movies with the clatter of the teletype machines, typewriters, chatter of employees across open newsrooms, the smell of ink, newsprint and the sound of the noisy presses. That nostalgia was also a symbolic expression of the stresses of modern-day organizational life brought on by wrenching change at the paper — technological, economic and structural as well as in ownership. Staff members fondly recall those days:

It was old times; the whole business with hot type, and hand copy editing and ripping and pasting and the bing bing bing noise from the teletype machines; that typical Hollywood concept which used to heighten the excitement of it.

Age, ethnicity and gender

Perceptions existed among the interviewees that age differences also created a subculture. One reporter called this a “generational” subculture: “Kids, very young reporters, would hang out together; that was an overlay of the geographic structure.” Some staff commented that they weren’t well connected with the newer and usually younger staff, possibly because the new newsroom culture was less driven by an apprentice and mentoring system of earlier decades when the paper had more staff to mentor and fewer new hires with degrees in journalism.

Staff members did not mention any groups at the paper that formed around ethnicity or gender, except in the 1950s and 1960s when women tended to dominate the Society section and men in public affairs and sports. The *Star-Bulletin* newsroom was probably the most diverse newsroom in the country, long before Gannett bought the paper and instituted a policy of requiring its papers to meet quotas in hiring of women and minorities. Among some women, however, there was a sense of unequal treatment:

I think there was a little bit of tension with women and men because the men were so overwhelmingly large there. The women weren't in real high positions until later, when you got a woman business editor.¹¹³

One staff member commented about the poor treatment one woman editor received by her male colleagues: "They would just give her the lip, and 'I'm not doing this, and I'm not doing that.' "

Another former editor commented that it had been difficult for men to accept her in a key supervisory position. The women interviewed did not say that gender was an issue or that it divided staff in any significant way. The comments were manifestations of organizational life in which the role of women was ambiguous, or not often discussed. It may have been one aspect of the newsroom power relationships that was shared by some staff members but not others. As Martin suggests, this should be acknowledged as an aspect of organizational life, albeit one that is not shared.

Routines and workflow

The routines and workflow of newspaper production at the *Star-Bulletin* are like those at any paper in the United States and have a similar influence on overall newsroom culture. They have contributed to a culture of fast teamwork, a sense of urgency and specialization of tasks all funneling toward a final product each day. The process of

¹¹³ There were two women publishers in the late 1980 and early '90s: Shen and Lum.

newspaper production epitomizes the nexus of influences that Martin talks about in culture and identity creation. Journalistic values demonstrated in story writing, selection and production have been influenced by ownership, leadership and local culture. Then the process that shapes and presents the stories on deadline within a competitive environment as a newspaper becomes a physical expression of culture and identity. First, I analyze the workflow and routines are analyzed; then the impact on culture and subcultures is discussed.

Reporters gather information from a variety of sources, analyze it, then write stories; these are edited, laid out and presented in the newspaper. Next they are printed and delivered to news boxes, stores and to homes and work places. This assembly line operation has enabled news to get to the public relatively quickly. Deadlines for stories, editing and page production, printing and delivery help determine which stories and photos make it into the newspaper. Another factor is whether the first copy deadline is in the morning — for an afternoon paper — or in the evening — for the next day's morning paper.

This workflow helps create a distinction between reporters and editors. Reporters are often out in the field, having contact with the public, while editors are on the inside, editing many stories and placing them in the paper. Reporters are typically the ones who get the glory and the awards because they have the bylines. Editors are the invisible ones who are often criticized by reporters for changing their stories or writing headlines they don't like. Editors usually have the worst working hours, working sometimes until

midnight for a morning edition or coming in before dawn for an afternoon edition. As a result, editors have a reputation for being a grumpy lot, and complain about reporters' poorly written stories that they have to "fix." One staff member described the difference:

Editors never have and never will get the credit and recognition they deserve.

Behind every award-winning story is a good editor. The good editor's name is seldom on the award.

He explained why there was only one newsroom award category for copy editors:

We created one category that was specifically for copy editors. It was one out of seven categories. That's just the way it is. I always tell people, if it's important to you to get credit for your work, don't become an editor. The nobility in being an editor is helping other people make their work better and having them think you're an asshole for your troubles. Personally, I enjoyed the anonymity of being an editor, the guy behind the scene making things better.

At the pre-David Black *Star-Bulletin*, copy editors handling the front A-Section worked in the early hours of the morning and typically had only about three hours to put their part of the paper together. In that era, when the *Star-Bulletin* was only an afternoon newspaper, reporters and editors felt they had to work harder than their counterparts at the *Advertiser* because of their morning deadlines. The *Advertiser's* staff had all day to

meet a night deadline for the next day's morning paper. One reporter reflected the common view about the paper's tight deadlines:

There are a lot of advantages and disadvantages to our publishing cycle. The *Advertiser* staff would come in around nine o'clock, drink coffee, relax, and build up to the task as the day progresses. We'd come in at 4:30 (a.m.) and have to hit the ground running, have to have a paper on the streets in four hours. And then try to catch our breath and do another edition and start preparing for tomorrow. It just didn't allow a lot of time for reflection and coddling.

In the late 1980s, there were three editions of the newspaper. The first edition of the paper began printing by 9:30 a.m. for outer island and outlying O'ahu editions and some street sales; by 1 p.m. for an afternoon home delivery. A 2:30 p.m. night final deadline enabled the paper to be hawked on the streets during afternoon rush-hour. The *Star-Bulletin* promoted itself as printing "Today's News Today." That was certainly true about foreign and national news and closing stock prices. Being able to produce today's news today was an important part of the *Star-Bulletin's* culture in the newsroom. However, as traffic congestion on O'ahu forced the *Star-Bulletin* to advance deadlines again and again to meet production and circulation needs, the paper was able to print less and less of today's news from Hawai'i itself. In the 1990s, the newsroom deadline for the Home Edition, which fed most home delivery, was moved to noon. There was an 8 a.m.

First Edition for street and neighbor island sales, and some outlying home delivery customers on O'ahu. At the same time, the Final Edition was dropped to cut costs.

The *Star-Bulletin* was solely an afternoon daily until Black purchased it and created a Morning Edition on March 15, 2001 that went head to head with the *Advertiser*. The Afternoon Edition, which was the bulk of the *Star-Bulletin's* home delivery, went to press at 10:15 a.m. Monday to Friday. That meant less local news (and even some national news) appeared in the paper the same day. However, the new morning edition went to press at about the same time as the *Advertiser*, about 10 p.m. for both, intensifying competition for late local news. Meanwhile, the *Advertiser* started an afternoon edition in 2001 to win over some *Star-Bulletin* customers. The *Advertiser's* afternoon edition had a much smaller circulation than the *Star-Bulletin's*, but, ironically, it had a later deadline, so it sometimes contained more of that day's news.

On the biggest story of the new century — the 9/11 attacks — the *Star-Bulletin* beat the *Advertiser* with its Extra Editions, both in the speed of getting the news on the streets (three hours ahead) and in the quality of its product. The *Star-Bulletin's* front page showing the destruction of the World Trade Center won an award from the Society of Professional Journalists, and garnered both national and international recognition.¹¹⁴

The newspaper's routines changed under Black's ownership, which put more pressure on staff because there were fewer resources, as one staff member commented:

¹¹⁴ Hawaii Professional Chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists 2001 awards for Excellence in Journalism: First place, Daily News Page Design Winner/Michael Rovner for "Day of Terror." The paper also won First Place for Spot News Reporting for "Day of Terror." The front page was displayed with other from around the country in *American Journalism Review*, October 2001 issue.

The biggest journalism change for the paper was after Black bought us and we went to a morning paper. Just being a morning newspaper and not staffing the afternoon edition the way we used to hurt the paper. We were a paper that started at 4 o'clock in the morning and had a series of deadlines throughout the morning, and for the community, we would definitely set the news budget for the day. What was on the three news stations that night was what we had on our front page. (The Afternoon Edition is) still a main edition, but we don't have the staff in the morning, and we don't have the capability to get much into the paper past 9:30 in the morning for the afternoon edition. And our staff mostly comes in in the afternoon. So, we're sort of stymied in how we are going to put out the newspaper because if something happens at 11 o'clock it's going to go in tomorrow morning's newspaper; it's not going to go into that afternoon newspaper. In the past, if it was until 12:30 in the afternoon, we got it in that day's paper.

He explained that he was able to get in late stories 30 years ago that would not make it today:

I came in at the end of lead when it was the hot lead process and it was just phasing out. (Spiro) Agnew resigned; Hiram Fong was a new senator.¹¹⁵ I met him at the airport to find out what he thinks about whomever is going to be the new VP. It was on the radio. Ford was picked. I was supposed to get a hold of Fong

¹¹⁵ Former Vice President Spiro Agnew. Fong was a Hawai'i senator.

and call it in. I drove out there at noon, talked to Fong at 1 p.m. and we're selling papers on Nimitz Highway saying, "It's Ford," with my quotes in it.

Another editor commented that the paper can still get some of today's mainland news in.

We still get mainland news first. We get a lot for the afternoon paper. The *Advertiser's* PM edition is small — not much circulation. We still would get the break and do well with the mainland and international news.

Specialization of work duties and standardization of work routines and workflow enabled the staff to mobilize quickly in crises and on late-breaking stories. That created a culture of teamwork and action with a common goal of the best story — and to beat the competition.

It was always amazing to me. Actually, it struck me that the senior reporters would just suddenly take charge and tell people what to do. That's what it seemed like. Such as in the Xerox shootings.¹¹⁶ They were the ones with the experience in crises. I'll do this, and you do that.

Even at the time of the sale of the paper by Gannett, the staff managed to react well to a crisis — the coverage of a major hurricane that devastated the island of Kauai.

¹¹⁶ This refers to a story about a Xerox employee who went on a shooting rampage at his office.

Iniki was a real interesting one. I think that hit the week after Gannett announced they were going to sell the *Star-Bulletin* and buy the *Advertiser*. Our staff was totally shellshocked, and we've got this huge, huge story we have to cover. One of the things I'm most proud of is how well they did cover it. All hell was breaking out on Kauai; our reporters over there didn't eat for three days. It was amazing. When that hit, I just went out to the copy desk and worked for two weeks. Barely even went into my office.

Several staff members noted that writer Helen Altonn was amazing during a crisis: "Helen, she would just be there and going, like a pre-arranged game plan."

At various times in the history of the newspaper the *Star-Bulletin* was either a "writer's paper" or an "editor's paper," depending on how much freedom reporters had and whether the City Desk editors were domineering. A paper is considered a writer's paper if reporters have freedom to choose the stories they cover without a domineering city editor. Many of the staff members commented that the tight deadlines meant there was less time for editing, and that perhaps this was another reason the *Star-Bulletin* had the reputation among staff in the 1980s and 1990s for being a writer's paper. They also compared themselves with perceptions about the *Advertiser* when deciding whether they were a writer's or editor's paper. At least in recent years at the *Advertiser*, weak stories were sent back time and time again for revising, one staff member said. Another commented that the *Advertiser* had more layers of editors too. However, one writer felt

the *Star-Bulletin* no longer had time for good writing or editing, and that there are few such papers left in the U.S., except maybe for the *New York Times* or the *Washington Post* because of cost squeezes:

It's all about money, profit. Newspapers don't have the time to edit, and they don't have the luxury of saying, you're a reporter, go dig up some stories. It's across America.

Managers and unionization

Most supervising editors at the *Star-Bulletin* were in non-union positions. A few, such as assistant section editors, at different times in the *Star-Bulletin's* history had been designated either as management positions or in union positions. This is important because as managers, they could be required to work longer hours without being paid overtime, and in the event of a strike, they would be asked to stay inside and get the paper out. They were in a somewhat contradictory position because most of the time they were line employees directly responsible for producing the paper, but at other times as supervisors had to take a managerial viewpoint. As managers, they are "closer to the top" and more exposed to the politics of decision-making and the business side of journalism. One staff member explains:

When you get closer to the top you see all the crap that goes on. When you are a cub reporter or a reporter on the front line, you just have to worry about your own

kuleana,¹¹⁷ your own beat, your own sources, that someone changed a word in my story, and that's your only concern really. The higher up you get, the more exposure you get. You see that with reporters, every word is precious; as a manager you get it from corporate, and you see the budgets and everything else. You see all the competing interests.

Rank-and-file workers at the *Star-Bulletin* and *Advertiser* newsrooms belong to the Newspaper Guild. Interestingly, cultural studies of organizations tend to neglect the cultures of unions because the focus is on corporate culture.¹¹⁸ But in Hawai'i, unions are well established and connected with the Democratic Party, which they had supported. In the early 1960s there were eight unions at the *Star-Bulletin*. A staff member remembers that time and the time of the first newspaper strike, which was the first white-collar strike in Hawai'i:

By the time of the strike, all the sports writers and women's department staff, the library – it seems they were, 80 percent or more of them of them, Democrats or left. Only two or three of them were really sort of Republican-voting people. They were bothered by having to walk the picket line. Of all the newsroom writers, few were not sympathetic with the strike.

¹¹⁷ Hawaiian word loosely translated as territory or interests.

¹¹⁸ Trice and Beyer, 1993. These authors note that in the 1980s, four volumes published on organizational cultures do not mention in any detail the cultures of occupations or unions. It has been in the past two decades that scholars have begun to study all the cultures that influence an organization.

For Gannett executives, who had an anti-union reputation, the culture of unions was a very real and important issue when they purchased a newspaper. They tried to break the union at the *Detroit News* in the early '90s, but followed a hands-off policy in Hawai'i, according to one former staff member:

They had a reputation for being very conservative, upstate New York types who were resistant to labor unions. They didn't try to break the unions here.

Few staff members talked about the union other than to mention the pay cuts that Black had imposed after the attacks on Sept. 11, 2001. Black was a tough negotiator with the union before he took control of the paper and won major concessions on the contract. And, of course, the unions were a huge factor in preventing the closure of the paper. But, as in most organizations, union representation does create a division between line management and rank-and-file staff because of the power relationship.

Technology

Changes in technology had a profound impact on all newspapers in America, and the *Star-Bulletin* was no exception. The reporter's tool, the typewriter, became electric, then computers were brought in. Photography went digital. Presses went from hot to cold type, then to phototypesetting, then to computerized pagination. One former editor explained the impact.

There were fewer and fewer support personnel outside the newsroom to put out the paper, so now the paper is essentially produced totally in the newsroom. The new technology displaced backshop employees such as linotype operators, typesetters, proofreaders, page paste-up staff and pressmen. All the work of these people was now done in the newsroom by editors and page designers. But we didn't get many more people to do the work, so we had less time for copyediting and writing headlines. That affected the quality of the editing.

Digital photography makes transmission from the field to the paper as easy as a phone call:

The technology, it's just been zippy. When I started there was that old photo clunker machine that you had to get it timed just right so you could get the photo you wanted, and there were CBs in the cars. Now, photographers can transmit photos from their cell phones. And then when reporters started doing that it was like a miracle — the advantage to deadline that brought. Back then it was the old teletype machines in a separate room, clack, clack. Now with the wires, it's not just the AP and New York Times, but CNN.com and tons of websites. It's a wealth of information.

Graphics too have benefited from new technology, and editors started using a lot of them, especially in color. Computers enabled graphics to be produced quickly on tight

deadlines, something that wasn't possible until around 1980 because they had to be hand-drawn. Still, artists did some illustrating by hand, scanned in the images and manipulated them later on the computer. Cartoonist Corky Trinidad explained that he used the computer to color his cartoons or put in shading after first drawing them then scanning them in.

After the sale to Black, the *Star-Bulletin* had to be published on the smaller, slower *MidWeek* press, which affected deadlines even though quality was somewhat better because it is a newer, offset press. With the new press, the paper's reproduction improved for color photos and even had more color capacity than it could use. However, using this capacity slowed down printing because of the time needed to get color registration right, so the *Star-Bulletin* used only some of its color capability. In addition, the *MidWeek* press had to be available to print *MidWeek*, *Pacific Business News* and other publications printed on contract. Nevertheless, the *Star-Bulletin*, for the time being, had better reproduction than the *Advertiser*. However, when the *Advertiser's* new state-of-the-art printing press came online in the summer of 2004 and could print 70,000 papers in an hour, *Star-Bulletin* staff members were worried:

It's a big fear, a big concern for me. I don't know what the company upstairs is thinking to meet that challenge or counter it. Obviously something needs to be done. Job One would be to try to get our own presses calibrated and up to speed. It's a scary thing. If anything that's on the horizon for us at the *Bulletin*, that could

be a death knell for us. If you talk about technology changing throughout the decades, that is a scary thing.

Despite the threat from the *Advertiser's* new press, the *Star-Bulletin* relies on its aggressive, eye-catching, powerful design that focuses on fewer stories on Page 1 than the *Advertiser*. The *Star-Bulletin* has distinguished itself as the bolder newspaper since the late 1980s with an emphasis on big, bold, colorful photos and graphics, a Page 1 layout with fewer stories, and creative pull-out sections that have won awards for infographics in several years.¹¹⁹ Much of this change can be attributed to Michael Rovner, who believes in taking risks, in teamwork and in the freedom to experiment. For example, the *Star-Bulletin* flag, or nameplate, could be altered by design; it hasn't been untouchable as it is at many newspapers. A reader might see, crashing through the *Star-Bulletin* flag, a photo of the Pope or a picture of Michael Jordan shooting a basket. In one edition that had a feature on bugs, ants were carrying away part of the flag as well as a photo of Rovner's boss at the time, Shapiro. One of the *Star-Bulletin's* mottos was "WE MAKE WAVES," and this was meant to symbolize the boldness of the paper in its design and in its aggressive reporting — presenting stories that mattered to readers in a big, bold way.

Newspapers are a physical, visual product with limited dimensions and a limited,

¹¹⁹ For example, awards from Pa'i and the Society of Professional Journalists have been won for page design and infographics in several years, including 1999, 2000, 2001 and 2002.

short life. Each day presents new challenges and creative opportunities, and each day is different. These characteristics shape newsroom culture as well as identity in several ways. Limited space and time forces journalists to reduce the complexities of news to the available space. Stories are trimmed, cut, reduced, squeezed and tightened in sometimes clever and creative ways to fit a predetermined space, which may be around advertising copy. Skilled editors, page designers and graphics artists can take complexity, pull out the most important points, and present them in a tightly worded headline, graphic, photo or story package on deadline. Finding shorter words that fit a space is an honored craft among news people. For example, take the headline, “Broken Trust,” or “What Price Paradise?” The headline captures the points of both those stories. Or, the point of the story can be told visually.

Graphics artist Bryant Fukutomi and Rovner created a graphic comparing prices of mainland eggs and local eggs, which were falling in production. To tell the story, they perched the mainland egg on a wall like Humpty Dumpty while the local egg lay cracked on the sidewalk. Graffiti on the wall showed the decline in local egg production. The symbolism about Hawai‘i went beyond eggs. In another graphic, the potential merger of Aloha and Hawaiian Airlines was portrayed as two paper airplanes with the logo of each airline; the merger never took place.

Having such direct control over the final product or seeing one’s byline on a story is one of the most satisfying aspects of newspaper work. The production of the visual artifact helps reduce some of the alienation and frustration journalists feel about

influences they can't control, such as ownership and the business of news. The creative aspect of news work and the sense that journalists are informing readers and making a difference in their lives drives the culture of the *Star-Bulletin*, like many other newspapers. The physical product also gets translated into the staff members' identity creation. They see their stories, their layouts, their headlines, photos, graphics and editing every day. Each time they see someone reading the *Star-Bulletin*, their identity is reaffirmed. For *Star-Bulletin* staff members, that identity is represented in the stories they choose and how they are presented with a simpler, more straightforward look that says: "Here's what you need to know about today. These are the top stories and images that relate to your lives." But it also says, "We're still here; we've survived. We're bold and feisty."

CHAPTER 7 CULTURE, IDENTITY AND THE SURVIVAL OF THE STAR-BULLETIN

This study analyzed the organizational culture and identity of the *Honolulu Star-Bulletin* in an attempt to understand its special attributes and whether any of these contributed to its survival after an attempted shutdown. This chapter examines these attributes and concludes that some of them did indeed contribute to the *Star-Bulletin's* survival, as expressed by the interviewees. The reason why the judge prevented the closure was to maintain two editorial voices in the spirit of the Newspaper Preservation Act, but we have to look beyond this into the identity of the newspaper that was projected to the public, and the foundation of that identity in *Star-Bulletin* culture, to understand why people were mobilized to save it. At the end of this chapter I also reflect on the challenges of ethnographic qualitative research and on my changing position as a researcher in relation to the interviewees. And I examine my assumptions and the epistemological perspective that I took in the study.

I assumed in the study that the *Star-Bulletin* is most likely perceived by the public in Hawai'i as a major news institution that produces a tangible product, rather than a business that distributes advertising. For this reason, the analysis focused primarily on individuals in the newsroom who produced or supervised the production of the daily paper. The analysis relied on interviews from a sample of these employees, as well as evidence expressed in the interviews and from published articles. In some cases the accounts by managerial staff members, such as editors, were privileged because of their

knowledge of facts about the economics, leadership and ownership of the paper at different times in history. The study could have been expanded to include all staff members as well as the members of the advertising sales and circulation departments, but this was beyond the scope and focus of the study, which was on the newsroom.

The study's goal was to gain understanding by pulling together the many interconnected cultural influences and their expressions in terms of culture and identity within the boundaries of the study, or the nexus, as Martin (2002) calls it, and to make sense of the *Star-Bulletin's* unusual survival situation in Hawai'i. Assisting me toward this goal was my integrated third approach that combined functionalist management theory and a symbolic approach that looked for shared meanings. This integrated approach, which had never been applied to a newspaper, is expressed in Smircich's definition of organizational culture, as explained in Chapter 1. She focuses on "a set of meanings that evolves, gives a group its own ethos, or distinctive character, which is expressed in patterns of belief (ideology), activity (norms and rituals), language and other symbolic forms through which organization members both create and sustain their view of the world and image of themselves in the world" (1983: 56). Her definition links identity and culture, though not explicitly stated, and helped me see the connections between the two at the *Star-Bulletin*.

This "set of meanings that evolves" implies shared meanings that evolve historically, create culture and identity in the process and give the *Star-Bulletin* its distinctive character. Smircich then defines an organization's worldview as "a product of

the unique history, personal interactions, and environmental circumstances of the group.” Using this definition for the *Star-Bulletin’s* culture, we can see more clearly that its members are both creating culture and identity while receiving it. Merging the two is how culture is shaped. There are both internal and external aspects to culture and identity creation, but they are two sides of the same thing when expressed as culture and identity.

It is important to remember that identity has been constructed by the interviewees; it is not necessarily a mirror of reality, but is a construction that is believed by the participants. Therefore, I cannot necessarily make a truth claim about these identity constructs, but analyze them as expressions of identity that were enduring, distinctive and central, and I suggest links with the paper’s survival.

The closure crisis helped to highlight important attributes of the paper’s culture and identity that may have contributed to its survival. These are discussed in more detail below, but are outlined here first. Key factors in the survival of the paper and their links to culture and identity were:

1. Competitive spirit: striving to get the most relevant news first. The *Star-Bulletin’s* culture thrived on the notion that the newspaper ran stories that mattered most to the community in Hawai‘i, such statehood, “What Price Paradise” and “Broken Trust.” But why did these journalists think they did the best work in comparison with the competition? Because they felt they were better connected to the community; that they were more “local.”

2. The crusading spirit of the *Star-Bulletin*. The culture of the newsroom was not always crusading, but was under various leaders, most notably Riley Allen, Bud Smyser, David Shapiro and to some extent John Simonds. The paper led crusades against martial law in Hawai‘i, for statehood, for a “progressive” Hawai‘i that promoted a tourism-based economy, and against corruption in high offices and against high prices. The paper used the slogan “We Make Waves” in its advertisements.
3. Historical ties to the national Newspaper Preservation Act of 1970, spearheaded by Hawai‘i Democratic Sen. Daniel Inouye, which enshrined the idea that the state needed two major daily establishment newspapers even though originally it was the *Advertiser* that had been saved in 1962. Inouye, a veteran of the celebrated World War II 442nd regiment, came into power at the end of the plantation era, when ideas about equality with *haoles* led the *Star-Bulletin*’s statehood drive. Drawing on this notion, the Democratic Party, its union supporters and other citizens rallied around the *Star-Bulletin* in the fall of 1999 so that a judge prevented its closure.
4. Loyal readers of Asian ancestry, like Inouye, who remember the pre-statehood era and the *Star-Bulletin*’s drive for “equality.” They were the new establishment and power elite. Staff members often talked about the loyalty of these readers. Their ties to this group were linked to a *Star-Bulletin* culture that served these readers.

In a sense, the staff represented them, and returned that loyalty in coverage of issues that appealed to them.

5. “We’re more local.” Here, occupational values intersected with journalism in Hawai‘i, as evidenced by the discussions about “local” style journalism, whether the *Star-Bulletin* could be labeled the “local” paper, and what these ideas meant to the participants. The culture and identity of the paper was tied up in the notion that they were “local” in staff and in the content and physical identity of the paper. One slogan that represented this was the “Pulse of Paradise.” Black understood this and brought in local investors.
6. Underdog mentality: We have to be better than the *Advertiser*. An us-them mentality prevailed, particularly in response to mainland ownership of the *Advertiser*. The *Star-Bulletin* was the smaller, independent newspaper that was not owned by Gannett. “Kick their butts!” was often expressed.
7. Motivated response to closure crisis. The staff pulled together during the 18-month closure crisis to keep the paper operating. Teamwork and loyalty to each other formed bonds and a tightly-knit community.
8. Survival instinct: ‘It’s guerilla warfare.’ Staff members treated the crisis like a war. They had been toughened by years of uncertainty when Liberty owned the paper and were accustomed to working under pressure because of their tough, tight deadlines as an afternoon newspaper. They would endure and respond to competition by attacking with award-winning journalism.

In terms of identity up to 2004, the *Star Bulletin's* central, distinctive and enduring attributes, to use Albert and Whetten's (1985) terminology, as expressed by staff members were:

1. Free-spirited: A "writer's paper."
2. Hungry, feisty, rough. "Grit and independence."
3. Bold, lively physical layout.
4. Not "the paper of record."

The competitive spirit at the *Star-Bulletin* is common at all newspapers, but during the crisis it was intensified because it was focused on pure survival. Competition has its roots in the need by the owners to be first on the street to gain credibility and to push sales. Deadline reporting and production became such an important part of the life of the daily newspaper that it encouraged aggressive reporting and a fast-paced assembly line workflow to "put the paper to bed" on time and be first on the street. Consequently, this approach influenced the structure of the paper set up to accomplish that work, which affected everyone's jobs, from the copy clerk to the back shop composer. Deadlines drove the subculture of reporters, who were often out of the office asking questions and digging for information. Deadlines drove the copy desk, whose job was to select stories, edit them and determine their placement in the paper while assembling each page. Photographers and graphics designers became increasingly important in the 1980s

because technology enabled them to respond more quickly on deadline. They were able to produce a more visually appealing newspaper. Assembly line work also was a team ritual that was played out several times a day so the staff could get the paper out quickly. It was emphasized at the *Star-Bulletin* because it was an afternoon paper and the time crunch was more intense than at the *Advertiser*. “Activity” that Smircich refers to relates to the routines and rituals of producing the paper, such as work flow and job duties. Being an afternoon paper was critical in defining the culture at the *Star-Bulletin* and its identity because of the earlier deadline. It ran more breaking news about the mainland, which is why it used the slogan: Today’s News Today.

“Language” is the language of news and includes phrases such as “getting the story,” or “killing a story,” “hard” and “soft” news, many others.¹²⁰ The language of the newspaper occupation also represents its relatively fast pace and deadline-driven tasks. Words are short and extreme. In daily news production, the world is often represented in stories in a dichotomous fashion — as two sides of a story — or it is deconstructed into key issues in an attempt to make sense of the world for readers. For *Star-Bulletin* news staff members, their “ethos” or image of themselves in the self-referential discourse was frequently in relation to the *Advertiser*, or the “Tiser,” as they shortened the name of the competitor. Likewise they constructed their identity in terms of us/them — a dichotomy

¹²⁰ Journalists at newspapers have their own occupational vocabulary. For example, the first paragraph of a story is called the “lead” or “lede.” “Killing” a story means throwing it away; news “breaks” when it is new. “Soft” news refers to features; “hard” news is public affairs and breaking news. How a story is “played” refers to where it is placed on the page. And then there is the language of newspaper design. The flag is the nameplate; the masthead is the box where all the editors are listed. Gutters are the spaces

in which the *Star-Bulletin* was saved because they deemed it the worthier paper compared with the *Advertiser*. There was the notion among staff that it was the readers who wanted the *Star-Bulletin* to survive because it had produced stories that mattered to the community. There was some difference of opinion about this, however:

“Broken Trust” made us realize a second paper is valuable. I do believe that it was a climactic moment (Bud Smyser).

Broken Trust enhanced the *Bulletin's* reputation, but it wasn't a single story that helped save the paper. Doing independent journalism saved the paper and will keep it going into the future (Richard Borreca).

An editor implied that the loyalty of readers helped save the paper:

People have a lot of aloha for the *Star-Bulletin* to this day. It's amazing what people endure to stick with the *Star-Bulletin*. There were huge circulation problems at first. We lost some readers: “It's the fifth time my paper hasn't been delivered.” I'm amazed at the extent that people go to get their subscription back on line.

Competition must also be understood in relationship to who the competition is — the *Advertiser*. Key phrases referred to competition as a fight, such as: “Beat the

between columns. Stories are measured in column inches. Picas and points measure photos. Art refers to

Advertiser; Kick their butt!” And, “Fighting spirit.” This self-referential discourse differed slightly when the interviewees spoke about different times in the life of the paper and in the identity and ownership of the *Advertiser* too. Nevertheless, the competitive spirit has endured, as these staff comments reflect:

Both papers competed quite a bit (in the old days of Helen Altonn and Harriet Gee). We still do now, but in different ways because our budget is so much smaller; our news hole is smaller.¹²¹ We have to pick our shots. It’s a different kind of competition, but it’s still competition. I don’t think any reporters or editors feel like they’re not in competition. I think we all want to beat the *Advertiser* on a story.

Shapiro commented on his competitive nature when he was managing editor:

It was very competitive. To this day I never set foot in the *Advertiser*’s newsroom after working in the same building for all those years. We were getting new carpeting once at the *Star-Bulletin* and the supplier didn’t want to bring in samples. They said I should just go look in the *Advertiser* newsroom and see their carpet, which is the same, but I wouldn’t even go look through the glass door to do that. I told them to bring in samples. However, my views of the *Advertiser*

photos and graphics. Headlines are called “heds.”

¹²¹ The newshole refers to the amount of space for news/editorial copy after advertisements have been placed on the page. The more ads, the bigger the newshole.

went more back to the smugness and vested interests under the Twigg-Smith ownership than under Gannett's.¹²²

It's ambiguous, however, whether the *Star-Bulletin* is or was the better paper. The *Advertiser* has the backing of Gannett's resources, and has had a larger circulation for some time. People like each paper for different reasons that are about individual tastes and perceptions: habit, loyalty, design, and a perception that one covers local or national news better. But staff members who are loyal to the *Star-Bulletin* do believe they do a better job with high-impact stories – the crusading type of story and editorial policy that the *Star-Bulletin* was known for, particularly since World War II. That included crusading for American-style education, for the *Nisei* during the war, and for “equality among races” during the statehood crusade. That spirit drove reporters in later decades to expose art fraud, government secrecy and high consumer prices on everything from gasoline and cars to broccoli. And, staff point to the greater number of awards won by the *Star-Bulletin* compared with the *Advertiser* during the previous decade (1992 – 2002).

Even though the staff members were competitive editorially, there had been no competition in advertising for 40 years, from 1961 to 2001. And, there was a close relationship between some news staff of both papers. There were staff members at the *Advertiser* who were married to *Star-Bulletin* staff members, and frequent staff moves between the papers. As one former employee said, “I have friends at both papers. They're

¹²² Interview with David Shapiro, Nov.14, 2001.

all journalists.” Another commented that there’s respect for *Advertiser* journalists, but a belief among *Star-Bulletin* staff members that the *Star-Bulletin* is morally superior because they perceive it has a history of support for local people:

We had a kind of an incestuous relationship for how long. But there’s also mutual respect. What makes them different? We didn’t have anything to do with the overthrow (of the monarchy) and all that kind of stuff. There are people there who are genuinely respected.

In fact, the *Hawaiian Star*, a forerunner of the *Star-Bulletin*, did support annexation of Hawai‘i while the *Bulletin* supported the monarchy. But the perception of staff, when referring to themselves, is focused on its support for non-whites. For example, staff called the *Star-Bulletin* the local paper because of its support for the growing and influential Asian American population after World War II through statehood. And staff members also refer to the hiring of non-whites throughout the history of the paper — all in comparison to the *Advertiser*, which was dominated by missionary descendents until Gannett purchased it. These “patterns of belief,” as Smircich calls them, among the journalists I interviewed were formed by the occupational ideology of journalism intersecting with local ideology in Hawai‘i, as in “local-style” reporting that some interviewees said benefited them. But what it means to be “local” was not agreed upon by the interviewees, which reflected the instability of the term as a contested and complex concept. Their definitions of local identity also reflected

their personal roots. Those born here said being local was beneficial, while those who weren't downplayed it. But some common themes emerged in reference to the concept of being local. Being local meant to staff members that the paper had less turnover among management staff in particular than the *Advertiser*, which interviewees said brought in many mainland people who didn't stay long. Interviewees also said that they did a better job of covering stories that were meaningful for the community, hence the slogan "Pulse of Paradise." Later, the crusading "We Make Waves" was added, and they were both symbolic of the self-referential language that was used to identify the *Star-Bulletin* to the community. The slogans reflected the culture of the newsroom while serving to bolster that culture by projecting it as an identity. Black used the label to help save the paper by playing to sentiments against big mainland companies.

"Local" was a way for *Star-Bulletin* staff members to distinguish themselves as being superior to the *Advertiser*, but the term seemed to reflect the fact that the *Star-Bulletin* more often had local managers. The *Advertiser* also had many local staff but more top managers from the mainland during the post-Twigg-Smith years under Gannett. The *Advertiser* responded with its own campaign to market its local identity, calling itself Hawai'i's newspaper, reflecting Gannett's policies to reach more local readers to improve local coverage and attract advertising. *Star-Bulletin* staff even said the *Advertiser* was more "the paper of record," which refers to the paper as a comprehensive chronicle of local news and events.

The term “local” as a symbolic label was also used by interviewees to describe how it benefited them as reporters, although interestingly, most who thought it was a benefit were Hawai‘i-born women. The term had different meanings that referred to having connections to family in Hawai‘i, having a more sensitive perspective, having Hawai‘i roots and being less aggressive and bold. There was a fierce loyalty among staff who used the term. The term “local” was used by staff members who thought that being local was important to distinguish themselves from outsiders, as Kent would say, and to resist mainland influence. It was a political form of anti-colonial sentiment by those who, ironically, had themselves become part of the establishment to the general exclusion of Hawaiians. Those who didn’t have Hawai‘i roots could be free from local connections to be the “dirt-diggers,” although many didn’t agree with the stereotype that locals are less aggressive than mainlanders, and said that dirt-digging was just good journalism. Being local was a positively shared concept among staff at the *Star-Bulletin*, but its meaning was ambiguous. Martin (2002) accepts ambiguity as a manifestation of culture. Even though the symbol was shared, its meaning wasn’t.

The ambiguity was perhaps a reflection of the complexity of the interconnected influences of Hawai‘i culture with the occupational values of journalism that was expressed in the culture of the paper. Journalism values were dominant in the newsroom as reflected in the journalists’ watchdog mentality, suspicion of those in power, and in reporting on what they thought the community cared about. Being a local was less important. The “community” and “readers” were also concepts that were vaguely

expressed. Only “the Kalihi housewife” was mentioned specifically as a constructed image of a *Star-Bulletin* reader. The free spirit of the *Star-Bulletin* staff members — some more than others — also reflected the “lone cowboy” stereotype of the journalist, seeking to comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable.¹²³

The watchdog value was an enduring one that was imported, and it didn’t refer only to suspicion of outsiders. Journalists were trained to be suspicious of anyone in power — government or businesses. And that value came into conflict more in the 1970s as media became big business with the growth of the chains, such as Gannett, and their dominance of journalism in the United States and Hawai‘i. Staff members disliked and were suspicious of Gannett. They gave the corporation labels, such as: “beast,” and “monster corporation,” or “bureaucratic” and “corporate.” An editor’s comment that “all they care about is money” reflected the nationwide state of media ownership, and was symbolic of the wrenching change journalists experienced at the *Star-Bulletin* after losing the journalistic freedom they had during the Liberty years even though the future of the paper was uncertain during those years.

The self-referential discourse used by participants to describe the paper and its culture also defined themselves, particularly during crises when ownership changed. The individuals came to be more and more committed and loyal to the *Star-Bulletin* as an

¹²³ For a discussion of changing journalism values and the lone cowboy concept see: Carl Sessions Stepp, “The Thrill is Gone,” *American Journalism Review*, October: 15-19, 1995. Herbert J. Gans discusses the roots of journalism values in *Deciding What’s News: A study of CBS Evening News, NBC Nightly News, Newsweek and Time*. New York: Vintage Books/Random House, 1979.

institution in response to the crisis. Whetten and Godfrey (1998) call this commitment “organizational identification.”

Organizational identification occurs when an individual’s beliefs about his or her organization become self-referential or self-defining (p. 172).

Organizational identification occurs as a process so that the individual recognizes that he or she shares the inherent values of the organization or changes to emulate those values (Whetten and Godfrey 1998: 75). These values are not to be confused with espoused values of the organization, but are more subtle. I call them “enduring values” that distinguish the individuals and the institution they identify with from another. These values and identity at the *Star-Bulletin* shifted over time as part of the process of culture and identity formation that was expressed by the staff.

For example, it was during the ‘70s and ‘80s with the growth of big media business that the *Star-Bulletin’s* identity shifted to that of the second paper in town. Staff members expressed ambiguity and conflict over whether the Hawai‘i Newspaper Agency under Gialanella had deliberately depressed the *Star-Bulletin’s* circulation, from which it never recovered, or whether the circulation was already in decline because of a nationwide trend away from readership of afternoon newspapers. Even today, some staff members wonder why the *Star-Bulletin’s* circulation hasn’t taken off. Staff members from the old days of the 1940s, ‘50s’ and ‘60s who were interviewed recollect a time when the *Star-Bulletin* was the big, dominant newspaper in town. And the way they

remember it is that the *Star-Bulletin* saved the *Advertiser* with the Joint Operating Agreement. But after 1993 when Gannett sold the paper, staff members used metaphors such as “underdog,” and “poor stepchild of Gannett” to define themselves. Again, the labels were always in relation to the *Advertiser* or to the big, powerful Gannett. The underdog attitude prevailed in the newsroom, and became a positive, motivational part of the spirit of the culture, as one editor commented:

It was the spirit of the underdog. You could tell because everything they (staff members) did was to (I hate to use the word) undermine the *Advertiser*; was to show them that they weren't the best paper. I really liked that attitude and it permeated everywhere. I didn't see any sadness or bitterness. They were feisty. It was pretty much upbeat when I was there.

Being the underdog imbued the culture with a tougher, “hungrier” edge, as expressed by this editor:

I think that because it's the No. 2 in a two-newspaper town there's always that chip on the shoulder. They're a lot more feisty; they're a lot more hungry. They really, really want to get the story better than the *Advertiser*, and they often do.

For example, a headline about the *Star-Bulletin* that reflected its culture and image during the crisis was “The story of the *Star-Bulletin* is one of grit and independence” (Borrecia 2000). The tough, underdog attitude surfaced during the 1999

crises in the slogan “Why you kick my dog?” that was directed at Gannett. *Advertiser* reporters, many of whom were friends with *Star-Bulletin* staff, were sympathetic with their plight. Ambiguity was expressed in the narratives of interviewees; anger was directed at Gannett, but the competitive spirit was focused on the *Advertiser*, which was owned by Gannett. Interviewees had mixed feelings too about the *Advertiser*, but there was a shared perception among *Star-Bulletin* staff members that their newsroom was a happier, fun place, albeit more “rough.” A *Star-Bulletin* staff member commented:

I don’t know the *Advertiser* newsroom, having never worked there, but from what I hear, here, you work hard and play hard, and you can be really busting it, but you’ll hear laughter fairly often when you walk through the newsroom; it’s not unheard of.

Another staff member mentioned that the quiet culture of the *Advertiser* came from the Twigg-Smith days.

Twigg-Smith promoted a quiet, go-with-the-flow newsroom, and liked it. You often hear noise in the *Star-Bulletin*.

A newsman from another news organization shared his perception of his colleagues’ newsroom:

Their (*Advertiser*) office was quiet and clean. People weren’t as rough-hewn.

What makes the *Star-Bulletin* unique enough to be saved? They're warm and fuzzy. Their city room has friendly people.

The new *Star-Bulletin* newsroom is open the way it used to be in the late 1980s and is brighter, but smaller than the *Advertiser* newsroom, giving it a more relaxed, less somber feeling. A longtime reporter noted that the relaxed, family-like atmosphere, in her experience, seemed to endure throughout her time even though there are fewer resources for reporting:

We have a nice balance of veterans and young beginners on our staff, and the atmosphere is relaxed and congenial. People chip in to buy food, cakes and cards for birthdays, interns leaving after the summer and other special occasions. Actually, I don't recall it ever being otherwise. It's always been a great place to work. In better economic times, we did a lot of traveling to cover stories throughout the islands and Pacific, even the mainland.

People may be attracted to work at the *Star-Bulletin* because of the free spirit that's sometimes an attribute of a smaller paper where there are fewer managers and a flatter hierarchy, and they may stay on for that reason as well. They feel less alienated from management and from the production of their work. Albert and Whetten (1998)¹²⁴

¹²⁴ Albert and Whetten (1998: 177) cite the "Organizational Commitment Questionnaire" as a way to gauge commitment.

explain that this identification turns into commitment, so individuals are willing to exert effort on behalf of the organization and have a strong desire to remain a member of it.

One staff member who was hired after an internship the summer before the announcement of the closure commented on why she took the job during those uncertain times:

Loyalty. I took the job. There was a flood of information in the *Star-Bulletin* that told me the history, and I read *The Chain Gang* (about Gannett). There was talk in the newsroom as well that Gannett was “the evil empire, and look what it has done in all these cities.”

The commitment to the paper in the post-1999 period was mainly a result of an unprecedented threat to close the paper. Most staff members were dependent on the institution for their future livelihood and were not offered jobs at the *Advertiser. Star-Bulletin* staff members pulled together more tightly during that period, and the underdog mentality became entrenched. The ability to do hard-hitting stories, which drew on the strong team of reporters who were already accomplished at going into action as a team when needed, contributed as much to the culture during that time as the crisis itself. But the crisis provided fuel. Reporters, artists, photographers and editors knew they had to do their best to survive.

The strong culture of the newspaper is reflected in the commitment of the staff; the loyalty of those who stayed on through its rebirth, who believed so strongly in a two-

newspaper town and in the *Star-Bulletin* that they'd take a lower salary and stick it out for the freedom they perceive they have at the paper. Questions remain as to how many staff members would hold on to the underdog identity over the long run.

Management theorists credit crises and problem-solving as being culture-creating activities, and the *Star-Bulletin* is evidence of that. But culture is transient. I saw a change in the staff during that period. First, it was relief and the recognition that the paper would survive, at least in the short run. Black was a savior. Then the economics of competition set in, and so did the cynicism of some of the journalists. Salary reductions and the post-9/11 economy hurt, but with Hawai'i on the upswing in 2004 and advertising sales and circulation up, the mood was a somewhat more positive, but not among all those interviewed. That sentiment reflected the uncertainty about the paper's financial future and the transient nature of culture. But what about identity? The culture may have been more subdued as stability set in, but by 2004 staff members still saw themselves, and the paper, as being in second place compared with the *Advertiser* but more effective in terms of design and certain scoops in news coverage. However, its circulation was still less than two-thirds of the *Advertiser's*.

The integrated approach I took provided a framework that enabled interviewees to express many additional facets of the organizational culture and identity of the newsroom. For example, staff members differed on the influence of particular leaders on the paper, on Gannett's corporate reputation, and on whether reporters were more restricted in the Black era on what they could write about. Most talked fondly of Riley

Allen and David Shapiro; but there were occasional mixed views about these leaders. When Gannett controlled the paper, and especially during the attempted closure, Gannett was portrayed negatively. Yet, those views were tempered by the realities of tough competition under Black and the threat that the newspaper's future was tenuous. These differences reflected their personal experiences and recollections, which, because of the interview time frame, tended to reflect positively on the distant past and more negatively on the more recent sale of the paper to Black. But, taking Martin's fragmentary perspective, they expressed the power relationship that different individuals felt. Those such as managers who had more power than others felt more positive and secure. I saw these changes because I started the study during the crisis period and followed it until July 2004.

The Star-Bulletin and Change

Competition has existed since there were two newspapers in the same town, but it has speeded up — a reflection of the rapid change that has affected the news industry as a whole. Change in the newspaper business has often been expressed in negative terms. “Newspapers themselves notoriously resist change,” according to Sylvie and Witherspoon (2002).¹²⁵ That's because The First Amendment protects them, and they want to guard their role as a watchdog in telling the public what they need to know and in

¹²⁵ For a discussion on the changing newspaper business see: George Sylvie and Patricia D. Witherspoon, *Time, Change, and the American Newspaper*, Mahwah N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2002.

following journalistic standards and ethics. Change driven by business interests is threatening because it forces newspapers to focus on readers as consumers of advertising rather than as consumers of news. Change driven by readers who want more say in the news is threatening because it reduces the power of the journalist. Change was a recurring theme among the interviewees as they talked about competition. Now, it's all about money, they said. The news business is big business, and the values of business are in conflict with journalism's values — except where competition is concerned. Journalists want to be fast and first too because their reputations depend on it. Journalists who are drawn to newspaper work do so because they are often service-oriented people, although the reporters like the glory of the byline. Those who are more ego-driven gravitate toward television.

Journalists almost have a religious conviction about their work. They say they want to make a difference in their communities, otherwise they wouldn't be in the business because it doesn't pay enough. When the values of service-oriented people intersect with those of business, where money has the most influence, there is conflict. That conflict is a result of change. The *Star-Bulletin's* culture is a culture of conflict because of this clash of values, which are expressed in the daily newspaper production through stories that were "killed" before they made it into press because they might offend an owner or advertiser. But at the same time it is a culture that's in a tense equilibrium because most stories do make it into the paper. And it is a culture of religious fervor that is exemplified in a story scoop or an outstanding design or photo. Whether this

conviction will ensure the paper's long-term survival remains to be seen, but it has at least contributed in the short-run.

Future of the *Star-Bulletin*

Which enduring values and attributes of this paper's culture and identity were critical to the *Star-Bulletin's* survival, and which need to endure to ensure a future? Staff members would say that its hard-hitting stories helped it survive; others comment that the notion of a two-newspaper town still dominates in Hawai'i, and the local identity of the *Star-Bulletin* as a second newspaper with a rich history contributed to its survival too. The fighting, crusading free spirit among staff members ensured their commitment to work long hours during the crisis. They formed a long-lasting bond of loyalty that helped many resist a temptation to jump ship, especially among those staff members who had other job offers because of their talent and skills. Its underdog culture in which staff members had to be better and try harder also helped to ensure the commitment of staff to its survival.

What remains to be seen is how *Star-Bulletin* managers will respond to the *Advertiser's* new high-quality printing press and to its intensified focus on local readers. In the visual era that we live in, high quality color reproduction is more important than ever, for readers and for advertisers. Will the *Star-Bulletin* continue as it is? Will Black and his investors buy a new press? Could the paper be more successful in a different form that's more like Black's other papers — as a tabloid? A new shape and look would result

in a new identity and consequent culture at the *Star-Bulletin*, particularly in the newsroom. Working for a “tabloid” doesn’t have the same status among journalists as it does for those who work for a broadsheet newspaper, which is considered more serious and less racy. Across America newspapers are being more homogenized in their look and content as resources for reporting are cut back and newspapers use more copy from wire services that are shared by all the papers in their chain.

Any drastic image change could eliminate many of paper’s historical ties that have created the culture and identity of the paper. Some of the paper’s ties with its history were been cut when the *Star-Bulletin* lost its archives as part of the deal with Gannett when Black purchased the assets. *Star-Bulletin* reporters have had to pay the *Advertiser* to use the library the papers used to share; pre-Black *Star-Bulletin* photos now owned by the *Advertiser* no longer have the photographer’s credit attached to them when they run in the *Advertiser*. The *Advertiser* credits them as *Advertiser* file photos. Even famous photos that used to hang in the old *Star-Bulletin* newsroom were taken. And, no one seems to be quite sure what happened to the famous World War II WAR edition that used to hang at the entrance to the *Star-Bulletin* newsroom.

The free spirit of the *Star-Bulletin* and its smaller staff size may enable it to respond to technological, social and economic change. After all, it was the first newspaper in Hawai’i to have a web site, which its Webmaster put up in quickly in a couple of weeks. Could it radically shift its look while including the public as producers of news? Could it engage in mobile technology to reach readers? Perhaps the staff

members, faced with survival issues, might be willing to shift the newspaper product itself — its content, feel, smell, look and delivery system. In doing so, they would be proactive in taking on a shift in their identity and culture — something that most newspapers in America are struggling with.

Reflection

As I worked on this study, I realized that was as much a scholarly study as it is my story about the stories of the individuals interviewed. I entered the study with an empirical frame of mind and with the privileged position of access to interviewees because my husband was in a management position. At the beginning of the study he worked at the *Star-Bulletin* and in 2004 moved to the *Advertiser*. My positions changed during the study as I became aware of different viewpoints that I got from him and the other participants. Naples (2003), in her study of feminism and method, argues that researchers need to be aware of their standpoint and epistemological assumptions, which I discuss next.

The “standpoint” or position I took was not really as either an outsider or an insider. Naples argues against this rigid dichotomy, which I struggled with at first until I decided that the tension in itself could move me to a third position. She explains:

Outsiderness and insiderness are not fixed or static positions. . .By recognizing the fluidity of outsidership/insiderness, we also acknowledge three key methodological points: as ethnographers we are never fully outside or inside the

“community’: our relationship to the community is never expressed in general terms but is constantly being negotiated and renegotiated in particular, everyday interactions...(2003: 49).

In a way, I was more an insider because of my husband’s relationship. He had started there in 1986 as an assistant news editor — a union position — and was later News Editor, an influential management position. So, at the time of the study, some of the individuals I interviewed may have viewed me as their boss’ scholar/wife; others as a colleague or the wife of a co-worker, and others as the professor/wife of someone they supervised. Although my position may have changed depending on the status of the person I was interviewing, I believe they all saw me as a UH scholar doing this study.

Naples (2003: 14) describes how she found her way: “The process of naming my theoretical orientation involved becoming aware of the epistemological assumptions I held about how knowledge is produced and what counts as evidence as I engage in the process.” When I reflected on my approach to the interviews, I began to understand, how my epistemology drove the study. I assumed that I could gain knowledge about the *Star-Bulletin* by gathering information through the interviews and studying texts, that is, through others’ experiences and my interpretation of those experiences by using a cultural lens. I had moved from empiricism and truth-seeking to an interpretive stance. What accounted as evidence was facts as well as experiences. In addition, I had my own

experiential learning as a former journalist, and I had lived 17 years of the life of the *Star-Bulletin* through my husband and other contacts with the newspaper.

I was not overtly taking a political position on the paper other than to support the existence of the *Star-Bulletin*. Like motherhood and apple pie, the notion of a multiplicity of voices and of competition is embedded in American values, and I shared those. Even though my husband later went to the *Advertiser* and my position in relation to the interviewees shifted, I respected all my friends and former students at the *Star-Bulletin* (and also at the *Advertiser*). I wanted the paper to survive for their sake too. In the end, sentiment aside, economics will most likely determine whether the paper survives, and in what form.

In some aspects of the study, particularly ownership and leadership, I privileged the accounts of those who were in upper management positions because they were able to provide the most factual knowledge and had an overview of the newsroom. Those who weren't in management positions naturally could talk in more depth about their area of interest – reporting, editing or design, as well as other aspects such as concepts of local identity or the physical newsroom space. Their positions in the hierarchy framed certain views, such as of leadership.

During the nearly three years that I conducted this study, I have reflected on my role as a researcher, and my obligation to my interviewees to be faithful to their stories in following the spirit of interpretive, qualitative research. But I have felt tension in doing so because individuals often don't have the same perspectives or interpretations. It has been

difficult to resist the temptation to “get the story” and to “get it straight,” following journalistic values. And, I felt my own understanding of the culture of the *Star-Bulletin* shift as I talked to more and more people, some of whom had left for the *Advertiser* or had worked at both papers. I could no longer see the dichotomy that framed much of the conversations when they turned to comparing the *Star-Bulletin* and the *Advertiser* because of each paper’s shifting identities. At one time each paper was the dominant one; at different times in history each was considered the “local” paper for various reasons, and each had been owned by Gannett. Also, when the *Star-Bulletin* was in private hands under Black, that didn’t necessarily translate into more journalistic freedom or better working conditions. In some cases in 2004 the *Advertiser* seemed to have more freedom from business pressures because it did not have any local investors.

There were ambiguities that were expressed as I analyzed the interviewees’ comments. I started out trying to apply only the cultural, symbolic approach to the study of the newsroom culture, but I was drawn as much to the interviewees’ interpretations of events and their lives as I was to an examination of the functionalist aspects of the paper, such as job routines, ownership structure and the newspaper business. I saw the need to integrate the two as well as link identity and culture. Theorists have debated these different approaches and there is no consensus. The advantage of this is that it leaves me open to hearing and seeing what the data offers.

In the end, self-referential discourse and other manifestations of culture and identity that were expressed in the interviewees provided a rich picture of the *Star-*

Bulletin and flagged many important aspects that needed to be analyzed and their connections to the paper's survival. I have seen that a reflexive approach offered me deep insight and connected me more intimately to the study, which I hope has helped others understand this important institution in Hawai'i.

APPENDIX A: CONSENT FORM AND QUESTIONS FOR INTERVIEWEES

Organizational Culture of the Honolulu Star-BulletinQuestions for interviewees

Below are some questions that can help frame our conversation about the organizational culture of the *Star-Bulletin*. We will focus on the ones that are most relevant to you.

The objective of the study is to analyze the unique local and global circumstances that led to the sale of the paper, as well as the attributes of the newsroom's organizational culture that garnered support. This includes a historical look at the *Star-Bulletin*.

The main research questions are: Why did certain individuals think the *Star-Bulletin* was worth saving? What was it about the paper's organizational culture that encouraged the creation of award-winning stories? What was special about the *Star-Bulletin*? What was it like to work there?

The study focuses on the time period up to March 14, 2001, but can also include reflection on the circumstances since the handover — i.e. what has changed in the new competitive environment?

Another purpose of the study is to enable participants to tell their own stories in their own words. The story of the *Star-Bulletin*, I think, needs to be told because of its role in Hawai'i and because it is at a historic moment in its history.

You may withdraw at any time, and will be given the option of keeping all or some of your comments off the record, confidential or anonymous. Results will be made available to you if you wish.

I also hope that you might be willing to review and reflect on your comments, which I will transcribe after our conversation. And, I'll ask you if you wish to keep any of your comments confidential or anonymous. Please sign below:

_____ DATE: _____

1. When did you join the *Star-Bulletin*? How did you come to the paper? What was it like at that time? How would you describe the culture(s) of the newsroom at that time?

2. What were some of the things that you remember when you were first hired? (i.e. stories about people, or “how things are done around here.”)
3. How did the newsroom change over time?
4. As far as you can remember, what were some key:
 - 1) events
 - 2) heroes (and unsung heroes; what does it mean to be a hero?)
 - 3) stories and myths about the paper
 - 4) traditions?
5. What was it like to work there? How would you characterize the newsroom’s culture (or subcultures) now, or when you left the *Star-Bulletin*?
6. Was the paper a “writer’s” or an “editor’s” paper?
7. How did management typically communicate with staff in recent years? How about when Gannett owned the paper, and before that under Chinn Ho?
8. What did you like or not like about your position?
9. How would you characterize the *Star-Bulletin*’s relationship with the community? How does the *Star-Bulletin* define itself in relationship to others in the industry? With the *Advertiser*? With the advertising/circulation department? With management/staff and between editorial departments?
10. How would you define “local?” Is the *Star-Bulletin* the “local” paper?
11. Can you describe some crises and how people in the newsroom responded?
12. What’s the paper’s No. 1 priority?
13. How were staff recognized?
14. What did you like or not like about the old newsroom in the HNA building? Why was the newsroom physically constructed that way? Who decided this?
15. How do you decide what’s newsworthy? (I.e. the news meeting).
16. What were the values, beliefs, and assumptions of the founders and key leaders that made it successful? (i.e. of the Farringtons, Riley Allen, Hobe Duncan, Bud Smyser, Dave Shapiro) Did they attract people who were like themselves?

17. What is its fundamental mission; it's reason for being? What justifies its existence?
18. Were there any formal ways of setting goals?
19. Does the formal structure and the way work gets done reflect the standard in the news business – i.e. assembly line?
20. Are there strong subcultures? Evidence?
21. What are the error-detection systems in the newsroom? How do you discover that you are not meeting targets or goals?
22. What do you do if these goals are not being met?
23. How do you and staff measure results?
24. How does the *Star-Bulletin* differ from the *Advertiser*, and any other news organizations you've worked for? (i.e. how people talk and think?)
25. How was your relationship with your immediate boss? Did you feel free to disagree with him or her? How are disagreements handled (with staff too)?
26. Could you bring family and personal problems to work, or were you expected to keep these separate and private? (E.g. if you had to stay home with a sick child).
27. What were some key social events?
28. How would you rate the *Star-Bulletin* on a one to 10 scale as a newspaper? As a place to work?
29. Anything else?

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